



**IMAGINING TAGORE**  
**Rabindranath and the British Press**  
**(1912-1941)**

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**(1912-1941)**

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# Contents



	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	ix
<b>The British Press: a profile</b>	liii
<b>Period 1912-1915</b>	1 214
1912	5
1913	16
1914	134
1915	185
<b>Period 1916-1919</b>	215 322
1916	217
1917	233
1918	303
1919	315
<b>Period 1920-1924</b>	323 389
1920	325
1921	328
1922	354
1923	375
1924	379
<b>Period 1925-1928</b>	391 459
1925	393
1926	405
1927	454
1928	459
<b>Period 1929-1935</b>	461 518
1929	463
1930	465
1931	502
1932	510
1933	515
1934	516
1935	518
<b>Period 1936-1941</b>	519 585
1936	521
1937	544
1938	555
1939	563
1940	573
1941	577
<b>Notes</b>	587
<b>Subject Index</b>	611
<b>Appendix 1</b>	625
<b>Appendix 2</b>	627
<b>Appendix 3</b>	628



## Introduction

The present book is a compilation of writings in the British Press, dailies and weeklies, on Rabindranath Tagore which appeared in 1912-41. The Press also published some works of Tagore, and these are included in this volume. The purpose of this Introduction is to provide the context of the British print media's presentation of an Indian poet and activist to readers in Britain, and to offer a critical reading of the material produced and propagated by it.

\* \* \*

In May 1912 Rabindranath Tagore completed his fifty-first birthday. Until then, his literary work was virtually unknown outside his native Bengal. He wrote in his own Bengali language, and only a handful of his poems and short stories were translated into English. As far as his travel to the West was concerned, this was limited to two earlier visits to England in 1878 and 1890 when he went there at the instigation of his family to study for some professional qualifications—this being a common aspiration of upper middle class male Indians of the time. However, he showed little interest in formal studies and returned home without any formal qualification. The third visit to England in 1912 was different, a momentous event, which proved to be a great turning point in Tagore's life.

The 1912 journey to England and beyond was inspired by a variety of motives and interests. '...the eternal humanity had its fullest expression in its heart [of Europe]. ...to see that great and awakened humanity I went to Europe in 1912'—he wrote later in one of his travelogues.<sup>(1)</sup> More specifically, according to one of his travel companions, a student from his Bolpur school: 'Most of the time throughout the voyage he discussed what methods and ideas he could observe and bring back with him from Europe for the development of his educational ideas.'<sup>(2)</sup> More immediately, perhaps, he felt he needed a break. In the preceding ten years he had lost his wife (1902), one daughter (1903), his father (1905) and his youngest and most gifted son (1907). It seemed death had become his cruel and constant companion. These were also the early years of his school, and the work, although exhilarating, proved to be hard and strenuous. The series of meetings, long hours of teaching and frequent travels drained him out both physically and mentally. 'I want to restore my health and for that I need a long voyage,' he wrote to a friend on 2 September 1912.<sup>(3)</sup>

Tagore was to leave India on 19 March, but had to postpone the departure because of a sudden illness. In order to rest he went to Selaidaha on the river Padma (now in Bangladesh), an area of peaceful green villages by the water. While convalescing, he began to translate some of his Bengali songs into English. 'I began to make the translations just when I was recovering from illness, and had no strength to do any original

work. They began as a kind of experiment, but I found that I had the same experiences in translating the songs as I had when writing them first,' he once explained to an English interviewer.<sup>(4)</sup> In a similar vein he wrote to his niece, Indira, 'I did not undertake this task in a spirit of reckless bravado. I simply felt an urge to recapture through the medium of another language the feelings and sentiments which had created such a feast of joy within me in the days gone by.'<sup>(5)</sup>

A different connection has also been made. In 1910 the Russo-German philosopher Herman Keyserling came to India and met Tagore in his Calcutta residence. In 1911 Prince William of Sweden, while visiting India, met Tagore and his illustrious family. The distinguished visitors were impressed with Tagore's personality and freshness of mind but had no means of appreciating his literary work so far not translated into any European language. It is possible this absence gave Tagore the idea to translate his works into English.

When translating his own work, Rabindranath Tagore was not consciously motivated by any practical consideration, suggests Marian Maddern. According to Maddern, the English *Gitanjali* was 'far from being strict translations of their Bengali originals. Often they seem rather to be paraphrases, or restatements, or condensations, or even combinations of Bengali poems.' 'Tagore,' opines Maddern, 'was not in fact acting primarily as a translator, in the sense of one who approaches a fixed body of material with the idea of getting it into another language. Instead, he seems to have been playing with his material—trying, for a whim, to see if bits of it could be recast or reexpressed in a language [English] ... it seems unlikely that Tagore was moved by any desire to communicate the nature and qualities of his Bengali poetry to a non-Bengali speaking audience. Or rather, he seems not to have considered it feasible to do so.'<sup>(6)</sup>

Nirad Chaudhuri, writing on the subject, expressed the view: 'It is impossible to think that this psychological situation with its sense of isolation as well as injury did not prompt the translations, with which Tagore only toyed at first. The idea of obtaining from the English literary world what he had not secured in Bengal must have been vaguely present in his mind.'<sup>(7)</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1910, the India Society was founded in London with the objective of promoting the study and appreciation of Indian art, music and literature in Britain. William Rothenstein, the principal promoter of the organization, was aware of Tagore's writings. English translations of a number of his poems were published in *Echoes from East and West*, and a few others in the Calcutta periodical, *Modern Review*.<sup>(8)</sup> Rothenstein's own interest in Tagore, and the propagation of the poet's work by the India Society to further its activities coincided. It is possible some of these events in London might have added to Rabindranath's own interest in rendering his works in English. Thus a constellation of factors, complex and apparently contradictory, and not merely 'a recapturing of sentiments in another medium' prompted Tagore to express himself in English. Indeed this journey can be described as intellectual, educational and restorational.

Tagore finally set sail for England on 27 May 1912, and arrived in London on 16 June. On the previous day *The Nation* had published one of his poems. From then on events moved fast. Tagore, at one stage, handed over the notebook of self-translations to

Rothenstein who promptly passed the manuscript to W.B. Yeats for his comments. Poet Yeats found these free verses 'exquisite in style as in thoughts.' An ecstatic Yeats read some of these poems at a dinner-reception held on 10 July by the India Society to honour Tagore. The invited guests included a number of well-known poets, artists and intellectuals. On 12 July a brief account of the reception was published in the *The Times*—the first report about Tagore to appear in a British newspaper. Soon after, the India Society published a collection of one hundred and three of these poems under the title *Gitanjali*—The Song Offerings, in a limited edition of seven hundred and fifty copies of which two hundred and fifty copies were for sale. The slim volume caused a sensation in Britain: merely a handful of intellectuals and artists in the metropolis were rapturous in praise, soon a select but significant reading public became familiar with *Gitanjali*. More interestingly, the British Press, the dailies and weeklies throughout the country, began to show an unprecedented curiosity about Rabindranath the poet and Rabindranath the man. The media interest in Tagore continued in the early years—the amount of writing was vast and varied; but by the time of his death in 1941 it had trailed off to virtual silence. It is with the print media's interest in Rabindranath that we are engaged in this Introduction.

\* \* \*

The facts about *Gitanjali* are well known. The India Society's edition lasted only three months. Subsequently, the publication was taken over by Macmillan and the fame of Tagore and the fortune of Macmillan both rose rapidly. Within one year *Gitanjali* had gone through thirteen impressions. A year after the publication of *Gitanjali*, the poet was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, the first Asian to be thus acclaimed. In his report submitted to the Nobel Committee for consideration of the award in favour of Tagore, Per Hallstrom wrote:

'the small collection of poems ... creates such a surprisingly rich and genuinely poetic impression that there is nothing odd and absurd in the proposal to reward it even with such a distinction as it is a question here ... It is certain, however, that no poet in Europe since the death of Goethe in 1882 can rival Tagore in noble humanity, in unaffected greatness, in classical tranquility.'<sup>9</sup>

Immediately after the award, the book, through translation into many European languages, became accessible to thousands in Europe. In Britain a knighthood was conferred on him in 1915. Tagore's tour of 1912-13 thus turned out to be an event of great consequence in his life, and for that of his country.

How did the British Press view the man Rabindranath and his book *Gitanjali*? *The Times* wrote on Tagore's poems even before their publication. The paper's comments were based on Yeats' reading from manuscripts at the Trocadero Restaurant on 10 July. In its issue of 16 July it commented that true art was universal, and Tagore by the moving power of his poems had confirmed 'the truth of that saying of his, that in spite of all difference of language and habits, at the bottom the hearts of men are one.' *The Times'* writer emphasized that it was not the exotic or strangeness of Tagore's art but its

ability to convey feelings which were common to all men that had won admiration of English poets and readers. It is to be noted, however that *The Times*, as a newspaper of records, which published the account of the Tagore reception of 10 July, his recitation of poems and the performance of his play at the Royal Albert Hall on 30 July, did not review *Gitanjali* as such. In a lengthy essay *The Times Literary Supplement* (7 November 1912), using *Gitanjali* as a mirror for reflecting the self, lamented the contemporary decadence in British poetry, its inability to express emotions stirred by ideas, its often mechanical and jargon-ridden language, and its coldness to God, values and nature. By contrast Tagore's poems in simple prose, often half-rhythmical, achieved a balance of harmony of emotion and ideas. To the writer in the *TLS* the ideas expressed in Tagore's poems, although universal in thought and sentiments, contained 'more of Eastern subtlety in his song of illusion and that separation which the creator imposes upon himself when he creates.' The *TLS* found that Tagore's poems were a timely reminder to the English poets: '... in reading them one feels, not that they are the curiosities of an alien mind, but they are prophetic of the poetry that might be written in England if our poets could attain to the same harmony of emotion and idea.' When reviewing or assessing Tagore's work it became a practice and convention to compare him with old European religious writers. The objective, it seems, is to evaluate him on a European scale to show affinity and similarity, as well as to foreground the fact that the new Tagore writing was really an old European genre, now lamentably forgotten. Yeats had already compared the poems of *Gitanjali* with the writings of Thomas a Kempis. Tagore's style was familiar in Europe several hundred years ago, the Irish poet had suggested. *The Times*, when reporting William Rothenstein's introduction of Tagore did not agree with the former's comment—that Tagore's mysticism, in contrast with Western mystics, did not exclude the material world and its delights—and reminded the paper's readers of Western mystics like Traherne and Crashaw who belonged to a similar tradition. Tagore and the East as the 'Other' or opposite of Europe, became a tenet, almost a doctrine of faith from the early days of Tagore's entry in the European consciousness. It was to be used to discover and restore the lost self, the European self. The best artistic endeavour of the East is best, not because of its uniqueness or strangeness, but for its familiarity and similarity with its Western counterpart. A poem in *Gitanjali* reminded the critique of the *TLS* of painters such as Chardin, and inspired him to comment: '...all true art is for ever discovering such connections and likenesses, finding the same significance in all things and making them all seem friendly to the spirit.'

In the year of its publication *Gitanjali* was reviewed by three other papers: *The Athenaeum*, *The Nation* and *The Westminster Gazette*. *The Athenaeum* (16 November, 1912) thought that Yeats' introduction to *Gitanjali* was 'impetuous' and his comparison of Tagore with Blake or St. Francis was off the mark. The Indian poet reminded the reviewer of the Psalms or Solomon's song. Yet, *The Athenaeum* found that 'his [Tagore's] normal tone is not the tone of warmth and passivity; and in spite of sustained beauty and spiritual accomplishment, his work exercises, upon a Western mind at any rate, a somewhat numbing effect, and one must doubt whether it is really consonant with the deepest meanings of the life of which it offers a key.'

In a long and erudite essay *The Nation* reviewed *Gitanjali* in its issue of 16 November,

1912. The crown of literature is the poetry of mysticism. Poets of mysticism are not easily encountered because it is rare to find one who has the genius to be 'an artist, a lover, and a seer' all at the same time and 'in a supreme degree.' Both the East and the West have produced a few of such 'highest class' of writers like Sufi Jelalud'Din Rumi, Franciscan Jaopone da Todi, Carmelite St. John of the Cross. Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet, is the latest addition to these luminaries. Tagore's mystical poems stood in total 'independence of time,' 'almost complete independence of place' and in an 'exalted passion for reality.'

*The Westminster Gazette* showed a strong disapproval of Yeats' assessment of Tagore in the review of *Gitanjali* published on 7 December 1912. The reading of Tagore's poems 'as an antidote against Western folly and vanity' was incorrect because such writing was neither unknown in the West in the distant or near past. In Tagore can be heard the voice not only of Thomas a Kempis, St. John of the Cross and Blake, but coming nearer our time that of Wordsworth and Walt Whitman. Indeed, 'over and over again this book echoes with Traherne, with Herbert, and with Vaughan. Tagore belonged to the company of writers whose writing is 'pure', 'full of 'spiritual vision,' and 'beautiful being simple and direct.' 'We need no esoteric knowledge to understand him. Peace is for the asking, is the burden of his message, if only heart and mind will give it welcome,' the reviewer noted with confidence.

In 1912 the British press read *Gitanjali* and commended it to its readers for its essential traditional Christian message then unfortunately lost to Europe. What was highlighted was that this message was universal, and obliterated the superficial separation of East from the West. In Tagore Europe found its lost soul, its own ancient and pure voice and for this reawakening of Europe the poet was thanked. In such reading one detects a certain political, moral and literary pre-conceptions where Europe and Christianity take the centre stage. This interpretation of *Gitanjali* denies the existence of a separate history and culture different from their own, something new, something they do not have.

In 1913 *Gitanjali* was reviewed in *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Daily News and Leader*, *The Spectator*, *The Globe* and *The New Statesman*. These papers confirmed and elaborated the particular reading of Tagore as already established, and expected him to play a certain role and part. *The Manchester Guardian* (14 January 1913) neatly divided the mankind into two distinct categories, orientals and occidentals, each endowed with certain essences. The orientals are simple, full of joyous abundance. They can express profound things with inevitable ease. Theirs is the mingling of delightful sensuous integrity with keenest spiritual experience. In sharp contrast the occidental is triumphantly superior in industry and commerce. The paper hoped that Rabindranath Tagore would epitomize the 'present Oriental epoch' and 'may win himself a spiritual empire comparable with the classic Persians.' The iconized Tagore would not merely represent 'his race but of the East.' Following the developing convention of writing on Tagore, *The Manchester Guardian* observed that 'to read these lyrics today must surely give something like the sensation an Englishman of the time of Richard II would have had on reading translations of Dante and Petrarch.'

Tagore's thoughts are deeply rooted in classical European Christian tradition. 'In

fact, there is no radical difference between his lyrical art and that of Europe.' With this view all critics concurred. But how does one explain this Europeanization of the oriental person? *The Manchester Guardian* knowledgeably suggested:

In a work, Rabindra Nath seems to be an Oriental profoundly influenced by European thought, but not in the least disorientated by the influence; we would rather say that the European influence has been completely orientalised in him. The old and distinguished family has a long tradition of English scholarship, and of interest not only in Indian but Anglo-Indian affairs . . . And it seems unavoidable to see in this some fusion of Western thought with Eastern. The East maintains its alert sense of what is behind life, but the West brings its vivid sense of immediate value of life itself.

Rabindranath is thus carefully categorized, put in the European tradition of great art and robbed of his Indianness. 'The European influence has been completely orientalised in him.' The best of East, it is emphasised, was derived from the West, though the best of East is somewhat inferior when compared with that of the West. This inferiority of the East is systemic.

In a similar vein *The Daily News and Leader* (21 January 1913) connected Tagore to Western thought and found in him the voice of Marcus Aurelius and St. Augustine, Amiel and Whitman. In Tagore the blending of 'the reverie of the Oriental mystic' with 'the dynamic spirit of the West' has come to fruition. In Tagore, *pace* Kipling, 'the twain do meet, for they touch that ultimate chord of humanity which is the same by the Thames as it is by the Ganges and they touch it with a mingling of the thought of the West with the rapture and reverie of the East that is unique.'

*The Spectator's* (15 February 1913) brief eleven line note on the book, under a long review of books of poems published in the previous year [1912], finds the writing 'wonderful in their way...' Even in a prose translation it is possible to realise something of the spacious wisdom and joy of the original.' For *The Globe* (1 April, 1913), *Gitanjali* was not 'easy' and because of the intellectual division between East and the West readers needed Yeats' 'admirable Introduction.' 'These are not poems to be read hastily or carelessly; they demand a certain surrender if their values are to be understood.'

*The New Statesman* (19 April 1913), in a flowing lyrical language, praised *Gitanjali*, and like other reviewers found in the poet reminiscences of St. Francis, Wordsworth, Whitman and the Song of Songs. Interestingly, the paper found that Tagore was a refreshing departure from many 'static Indian poet-philosophers' and was radiant with incessant variety,' thanks to the influence of European writers on him.

Apart from Tagore's English prose-poems then in view of the British public and reviewed by the press, of all other papers it was only *The Times* which reported the news of the performance of a play, *Maharani of Arakan* (based on a short story of Rabindranath) in London on 30 July 1912. The paper's theatre critic found the play 'attractive' and 'well-staged' However, revealingly, the reviewer was highly critical of a statement made in the programme brochure, and uttered a cautionary note: 'We cannot tell who was responsible for the statement on the programme that "below the surface" of the comedy lay a political lesson on the relations of England and India. Whether Mr. Tagore's story were a political allegory or not, such references are better omitted from the programmes

of artistic entertainment.' The long-entrenched conventional view of the time was, of course, that art and politics fell into separate categories and their mixture was unwarranted. In *The Times*' reiteration of the canon there was perhaps a subtle message. Rabindranath Tagore as a mystic poet, as a seer from the East was welcome in Britain, but not a political Rabindranath. Next year, in a general article on staging of Indian dramas in Britain, an Indian, Harendra N. Maitra, referred to Tagore's *Maharani of Arakan* and quoting the same passage of the programme commented that 'it has been justly said,' and hoped such plays would help 'to bring the East and the West into closer touch of amity and mutual understanding' [*The Westminster Gazette*, 21 May 1913]. Thus, for dealing with and for benefiting from, a particular Tagore was imagined and constructed. The press expected him to follow an authorized path and programme. That Tagore turned out to be a transgressor as we shall see later.

From the beginning the British press also showed a keen interest in Tagore as a person. His physical features, manner and bearing, his past achievements and present fame all became highly newsworthy and material for publication. For its story about the man the press relied on information supplied to it by Indians, mostly students then in Britain. Understandably the students' statements were often highly coloured and were couched in picturesque language. Tagore was described as a 'poet and saint of Bengal.' *The Nation* depicted him as 'an Indian mystic.' Yeats quoted with approval a distinguished Bengali doctor as saying, 'we call this the epoch of Rabindranath. No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us... his songs are sung from the West of India to Burmah, wherever Bengali is spoken...' His exceptional physical appearance was described again and again in most poetical language. 'Mr. Tagore leant over his reading-desk—a tall, slim, figure dressed in tight-fitting garments of black; a face with finely chiselled features and with the deep-set eyes and a flowing beard in which grey is taking the place of black..., ' reported *The Westminster Gazette* on 10 May 1913. The peace and tranquility that was present in physical Tagore came to be contrasted against the restless European man: 'His lithe, gentle figure and luminous eyes, and the visible peace that rests upon his finely moulded face, have a quality of gentleness and charm that shames our noisy, clumsy Western ways and manners. One feels too heavily shod, too loud of speech, not fine enough in texture beside this gliding figure subdued to perfect balance, mentally, emotionally, and physically, by years of mystical contemplation and development of interior resources,' wrote *The Christian Commonwealth* on 21 May, 1913.

To sum up. In 1912-13 the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore was enthusiastically received by the British Press, leading artists, poets and intellectuals of the country. Soon a large readership of his works was established among the educated public and *Gitanjali*, his first book in English, became one of the bestsellers of the time. The reviewers read him in their own Eurocentric way, and he was given a place of honour with the past and recent Christian mystic writers of Europe. About his literary skill the largely unanimous opinion was very positive and enthusiastic. Tagore's style was 'exquisite' and 'simple', and 'it is difficult to think of those poems as translations, renderings of the original into English by the poet himself—so perfect is the mastery of the

verbal and rhythmical resources of our language.' Later, as we shall see, Tagore's self-translation of his other works and those translated by others came under much critical comments. The English *Gitanjali* when first published was praised for its highest literary workmanship and Tagore's translation was described by one reviewer as possessing a 'trance-like beauty.'

\* \* \*

In November 1913 Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel prize for literature. It is to be noted, however, that long before the award, throughout 1913, he was much noticed, reviewed and commented on by the press. His lyric drama *Chitra*, which Tagore read to an audience on 9 May was reported by the media. *The Times* (10 May 1913) wrote, 'the reading occupied nearly an hour, and was listened to with rapt attention by an audience.' Later in the same month Rabindranath's play, *The Post Office*, was performed at the Abbey theatre, in Dublin. Reviewing the drama *The Irish Times* of 17 May 1913 observed that the play and its performance was appreciated by a large number of theatre-goers, and the author's entry into another art form confirmed the 'high opinion' held of him by Yeats and others. *The Manchester Guardian* of 21 May 1913 compared *The Post office* with *Hannele* and *The Death of Tintagiles*, but found that in Tagore's play 'there is nothing of dread, nothing of harshness' that the other two conveyed. 'The whole play leaves the impression of something gracious and adventurous.'

We have seen that from the early days of his introduction to European readers Tagore was described as an Indian mystic who was eminently suitable for mediating between the East and the West, helping the latter to recover its lost soul, a pristine Christian humanistic soul. In 1913 the print media published a number of lengthy and learned articles on this 'Seer from the East.'

On 21 May 1913 *The Christian Commonwealth* published the report of an interview with Rabindranath under the headline 'The Living Voice of India.' In the carefully written article detailed information about him, his family, his education, both formal and informal, his literary achievements, were given for the first time to the Western readers. Tagore's early introduction to Brahmo Samaj, his father's spiritual journey, his own religious development were discussed in detail. The paper also wrote about his school in Bolpur where learning and training take place in 'freedom' and 'on spiritual lines.' The interviewer found in the 'message' of *Gitanjali* 'a wonderfully sweet and melodious voice from the ancient East.' The voice, although 'strangely unfamiliar, yet intimate and human and kindly' was for Europe 'entrance to the great fair of common human life.'

Starting from 19 May 1913, Tagore gave a series of lectures in Caxton Hall, London on the general subject of God and spirituality. Commenting on these talks, *The Inquirer*, (24 May 1913) referred to an ascetic Tagore who was refreshingly different from the stereotypical Eastern mystics. Indian philosophy could often 'perplex' and was somewhat indifferent to worldly things. In Tagore one finds an appreciation of West's 'vital energy and constructive power which has made us a mighty nation.'

Yet his warning that the West should not 'forget the things that are of real value for the soul in the pursuit of wealth and racial supremacy.' Thanks to Tagore the West has the opportunity to learn from India, 'for her civilisation was cradled in the ancient forests where she learnt to identify her life with the whole universe and the spirit which breathes through it.' In the material West India was needed as a healer, and Tagore was most suited for this role.

In a second article published in the same month (28 May 1913), *The Christian Commonwealth* congratulated itself for the Tagore interview article published only a week ago. This aroused excellent response, and inspired a large and enthusiastic audience who came to Oxford when the poet visited the place that month. The talk which Tagore gave there was most warmly commended: 'One felt that the whole problem of modern social life had been lifted on to a plane higher than is usual, and had been dealt with in a most moving spirit of mystical insight.' The Christian paper found much in common with Tagore who denounced the crassness of modern material civilization, which had heightened selfishness and separateness. What was needed was 'a spirit in harmony with the laws of the whole.' 'Through love, and love alone, can this harmony be won.' Tagore a large section of British Christians made the abyss that the West edged toward, and how the imminent disaster could be averted. Similar sentiments were expressed in another Christian periodical, *The Inquirer*, which quoted at length extracts from the Caxton Hall lectures. *The Westminster Gazette* (3 June 1913) also published parts of these lectures with approval and commendation.

Meanwhile *The Times* (16 June 1913) recorded Tagore's reception by students at the Criterion Restaurant. Some 300 people came to the party where the Indian poetess Sarojini Naidu made a striking speech. In July 1913 *The Post-Office* was staged again, this time in London, and the reviews of the performance were published in *The Times* and five other papers. *The Times* (11 July 1913) critic found the play 'dreamy, symbolical and spiritual,' but 'it is a curious play, leaving to a certain extent a sense of incompleteness, since it ends before its climax, rich in poetical thought and imagery...' *The Post Office* was described as 'an Indian allegory' by *The Evening Standard* and *St. James's Gazette* (11 July 1913) who saw in it a 'deepest significance that passes unnoticed under the attention of the casual observer.' For *The Globe* (11 July 1913) it was a product of a 'Hindu author' and the work was not really 'play' but something of a 'poetic and conversational fragment.' The theme of the play reminded the critic of 'something of the philosophy and illusive symbolic atmosphere of Maeterlinck', [as well as] 'the simple pathos of Sudermann in the final scene of *Hannele*.' The review in *The Westminster Gazette* (11 July 1913) was least complimentary: 'To the eye of faith the little piece may have its beauties, and no doubt it is a creditable attempt by an Indian gentleman to write a play. But it was all one note and never moved an inch; and looking back on it, I cannot remember anything said by anybody to cause it to go on even for the short time that it lasted.' An Indian play performed by Irish players on a London stage raised some satirical comments. Reviewers were amused to see Irish players 'in the white garments of the East' speaking in 'Irish accent with the darkened faces.'



The popularity of *Gitanjali* inspired Tagore to translate and his publisher Macmillan to bring out his other works. In 1913 two books of poems were published. The first, *The Gardener*, contained a selection of poems written before *Gitanjali*. The book received a mixed review. *The Observer* (12 October, 1913) praised its 'simplicity and directness.' 'He takes the little intimate things which comprise life and fashions them into pearls which reflect the colour of the sky, the mightiness of love and life.' *The Pall Mall Gazette* (14 October 1913) agreed but regarded 'The present book of love lyrics is less mature and less profound than the spiritual poems in *Gitanjali*.' Tagore's composition 'was marred by too frequent use of the refrain, and the honeyed flavour of the diction grows monotonous.' This 'monotony' was put down to 'the languors of the East,' and the poet, under 'the narcotics of passion' failed to summon back 'his manhood.' Tagore's English also came under certain criticism: his use of arcane words, his application of such words as 'cowshed' and 'fists.' It appears that Tagore as a spiritual poet was preferred to a poet of love lyrics. He was advised to forsake the touches of semi-realism and express sentiment or irony alone. The poet received an accolade from the reviewer for 'a playful bit of verse describing the peep of passing damsel through her veil—it almost reminds one of the window poem in Locker-Lampson's *London Lyrics*.'

In a robust but somewhat curious article R. Ellis Roberts reviewed *The Gardener* for *The Daily News and the Leader* (27 October 1913). Ellis Roberts deprecated the habit of the English who regarded the people of the East as essentially different beings from themselves. The essentializing of 'every son of India...[as naturally] endowed him with a mysticism and a sense of the unseen denied to the Western,' came under severe criticism: 'People forget the fact that all the greatest mystics from Erigena to St. Theresa have been Westerners; that there is nothing in any Eastern nation to correspond with the depth and intensity of the body of Christian mysticism.' In Ellis Roberts' judgement Indian art and letters did not 'differ essentially from Europe.' The significant fact was that 'neither in art nor letters, has it [India] ever reached the perfection which Europe attained.' Tagore touched a cord with the British readers because *Gitanjali* derived 'its essential inspiration and message from the depth of Western spiritualism.' 'Those of us who felt from 'Gitanjali' that Mr. Tagore's genius was strictly individual, and his inspiration derived from Western rather than Eastern sources—as would only be natural in one born into the Brahmo-Somaj—are fully justified by this new volume.' In *The Gardener* the influence of Keats, Swinburne, Shelley, Rossetti, Austin, Verlaine and Buchanan is clear, opined Ellis Roberts. He warned readers not to expect any deep insight about love or God. Tagore's gift lay essentially in the 'pictorial', and his thought did not go beyond the 'ordinary young men's ideas about love.' The remark was equally true for *Gitanjali* and *The Gardener*. One should not expect Tagore to be philosophical or mystical.

The other fact about Rabindranath was his country's imperial connection with the British. Reviewing *The Gardener* in *The Daily Mail* of 29 October 1913 F. Ashworth Briggs was almost ecstatic about the poet—'a great man in Bengal,' 'a star in the firmament of the poets,'[his works] a source of 'delight, refreshment and surprise.' Such skill in literature

was possible' due to British rule of India, English education and Christian missionary influence. 'It is something new in our imperial history to get literature in our own tongue from the East.' Thanks to Tagore the unfortunate experience of Sepoy Mutiny can now be put aside, as well as that of Kipling's portrayal of the country in unfavourable light. 'These left in the English mind a strange impression of India—an effect of harsh, bright colours, vast spaces, hardness and treachery, suttee, bombs, and plague. The Englishman travelling in India feels a vast gulf between white and brown. The poet bridges it. No one who reads him will be able to think of India as before.'

Not only was Tagore a timely correction to the old bad image of India, his simple, 'human and unadorned' verses devoid of any 'scholarly' pretension were a breath of fresh air in 'our artificial world.' Thus Rabindranath's root and his role in the Western literary field was flagged and signposted.

*The Daily Telegraph* (14 November 1913) found the verses of *The Gardener*, 'not distantly resembling that of the English version of the Psalms,' essentially of inferior quality: 'they have a charm of surface which scarcely compensates for essential alightness.' Tagore's too frequent use of metaphors reflected his oriental quality of being extravagant with language in which the absence of 'an inspired thought was noticeable.' Only in parts was *The Gardener* enjoyable where 'his employment of apt English' was striking.

*The Daily Chronicle* (15 November 1913) was unstinted in its praise for *The Gardener*. Under the title 'A splendid gift to English poetry,' Edward Thomas, its reviewer, found 'variety' in the book—more variety in it than, for example, in Mr. Mackail's *Selections from the Greek Anthology*. Apart from 'some of the repeated lines which are rather tiresome in prose,' and some technical slippage in using hexameters, 'the volume as a whole is a splendid gift to English. For they are English poems which have Bengali prototypes rather than translations.'

A provincial paper, *The Yorkshire Observer* (21 November 1913) was relieved to inform its readers that in the love poems of *The Gardener* 'there is not a hint throughout the volume of the existence of sex problems or a woman's question.' Tagore was on the side of the 'feminists' of the day!

The second book of the year was *The Crescent Moon*, a collection of poems where there was 'a new revelation of the poet-mind' (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 November 1913) with its writing about childhood memories and the innocent world of early life. The book was much better received than *The Gardener*. The reviewer in *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote: 'In these translations of some forty lyrics he touches once more the national and authentic spirit of Indian speech with an alertness that is not far short of genius.' For *The Globe* (27 November 1913): 'In *The Crescent Moon* Rabindranath Tagore offers a revelation more profound and more subtle than that in *Gitanjali*. He opens to us the child-mind—that mind which all of us have possessed, and all save an inspired few have long ago forgotten... this revelation of child-mind is richer, more complete, more convincing than any of which we have had previous knowledge.' For *The Evening Standard and St James's Gazette* (4 December 1913) 'the work does strictly belong among fairy-tales, but it is of a magical world that it tells.'

We have seen that Rabindranath has been compared with an array of European

poets and writers, his essential genius has been located in Western Christian tradition and his debt to English education and influence highlighted often enough. In the canon of literary criticism comparative study has an important place and useful pedagogic role. But our reading of British press reviews of Rabindranath shows that in the overeagerness to compare him with a large number of disparate writers from different historical times and territories is not innocent. The incessant urge to compare his genius with famous as well as little known European writers, to find him a place beneath them, reveals a mind that is arrogant and Eurocentric. In a fruitful comparative study not only the sameness of features has to be clearly recognized but also their distinctness distilled and crystallised. The press writers' attempt at comparison is often marked by a facile caricature and cultural stereotypes. In *The Crescent Moon* traces of George MacDonald's diction and thought was found (*The Northern Echo*, 12 December 1913). 'It is often as solemn and lofty as Shelley, at the same time that it is as plain as Blake, and as familiar as Jane Taylor...' thus wrote *The Daily Chronicle* of 12 December 1913. For *The Glasgow Herald* (25 December 1913) the poems in *The Crescent Moon* are 'like some of best Stevenson.'

In October 1912 Tagore left England for the United States. While there he gave a series of lectures at Harvard University. In 1913 these lectures were published as *Sadhana* by Macmillan. *Sadhana* contained Tagore's thoughts on Indian philosophical outlook upon life and the Universe, the teachings of the *Upanishads* and of Buddha, and his interpretation of the oriental spirit. The writing was praised for its great style, lucidity and simplicity. His poetic prose was strikingly beautiful and moving.

The reviewers of *Sadhana* found much in the book to engage in learned discourse on mysticism, eastern religion, Christian influence on reformed Hinduism and the common thread that bound together such thinkers as Bergson, Maeterlinck and Tagore. *The Nation* (13 December 1913) in a long review (which included *The Crescent Moon*) found in the present time a so-called 'revival' of mysticism, and Tagore's writing on the subject belonged to the same trend. *The Saturday Review* (27 December 1913) agreed that the poet-philosopher Tagore was 'in tune with [his] generation,' and like M. Bergson was able to catch 'the mind of Europe on its recoil from materialism.' The important role of Tagore as an East-West mediator was hailed: 'Perhaps the most popular philosophic thing in Europe to-day is a vague restoration of God and the soul in terms of biology or of mysticism. Mr. Tagore, interpreting *Upanishads* of the East, has hit a happy hour for filling the aching void of Europe, and he has met a correspondingly high reward. He is the most successful medium of our time between East and West.' Tagore was popular, Tagore was successful, but he was not profound, the reviewer warned his readers. Mr Tagore 'plays poet better than he plays philosopher.' His words are vague and soothing. 'It is not thought... like Maeterlinck, Mr Tagore, in his poetry as in his philosophy, appeals to lazy folk. His words are comfortable so long as we do not trouble to ask what they mean... no stress of imagination, no wrestle with God, has stirred its contented murmur, or sounded a challenge to the brain and soul of the reader.'

*The Manchester Guardian* (6 January 1914) also did not find in *Sadhana* any original thought or idea: 'he appears wonderfully close in feeling and outlook to such thinkers as

Emerson or, more recently, Edward Caird... it could truly be said that there is not a thought he utters but could be found in these pages.' However, for the reviewer, it was satisfying that apparent difference in outlook on life will prove ephemeral.

*The New Statesman* (17 January 1914) was more biting in its criticism. It agreed that the West's hostility to Nature, its futile craving for ever more material possession, its failure to realize that perfect goodness is to attain the infinite in one's life, are matters of grave concern. 'All this is very true, but can the most elementary student of ethics forbear the thought that he has heard it all before? Has it not the vagueness, the inapplicability, of the platitude?'

A different gloss was put on the issue by *The Spectator* (14 February 1914). Here the reviewer found the doctrine propounded by Tagore much influenced by Christian teaching. ...Such a mental attitude is possible perhaps shows to what extent Christian ethics have been absorbed and utilized by modern Hindu. However, 'Tagore does not explicitly or implicitly acknowledge the debt which Bengal owed the Christian teaching...' Unfortunately they do not acknowledge their debt to Christianity even Tagore implicitly asserts that India has nothing to learn from Europe on the spiritual side.'

Only a suburban paper, *The Birkenhead News* (21 January 1914), was able to find in the book 'much food for careful thought and reflection. It sounds a high note, and the many world problems upon which it touches and rendered all the more interesting by seeing as they appear to the Eastern mind of a great prophet.'

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The award of the Nobel Literature prize to Rabindranath Tagore was widely published in the newspapers of Britain. The context provided another occasion for assessing *Gitanjali*, the man who wrote the book, and, interestingly, some speculative journalism about the politics of Nobel prize. There followed many learned discussions of Tagore's skill in English language, his relative merit *vis-a-vis* a large number of European writers, his indebtedness to British connection and influence.

In a rather condescending note *The Evening Standard and the St. James's Gazette* (14 November 1913) announced the award of the prize to Tagore under the headline 'Enter the Orient,' and assured its readers that 'not for a moment do we grudge the award.' As has by now become the practice in reviewing Tagore, that the name of Walt Whitman should be mentioned, and astonishingly, 'There is much in common between him and George Eliot.'

*The New Statesman* (13 December 1912) noticed that after the Nobel prize his sales were up enormously. The prize was a matter of faith rather than sure knowledge—the judges knew no Bengali. The prize was based on a single volume in English. 'Those myriads of Anglo-Saxon sheep who, because of the Nobel award, are rushing to buy Tagore's volumes are buying some thing which, whatever it may be in the original, is in English rather thin and monotonous.'

Why was Tagore selected by the Nobel Committee for the award in 1913? Why did they disregard the 'just claim' of Thomas Hardy or Anatole France? *The Daily News and*

*Leader's* correspondent (14 November 1913) in Stockholm expressed his puzzle that such writers of utterly different character, Kipling ('this rough rider of imperialism') and Tagore ('the delicate artist of the most intimate nationalism') were selected for the award. The Nobel Committee was a conservative body, its orthodox and traditional outlook changes but only slowly. It has somehow thought fit to honour both Kipling and later Tagore, but 'the scepticism of Anatole France and pessimism of Thomas Hardy' were too 'unorthodox to find favour.' Tagore posed no threat to the members of the Committee because 'the great themes are same for Orient as for the Occident, because they are humanity which in many essentials is the same everywhere.'

*The Daily Telegraph*, of the same day, in giving its readers the news of Tagore being awarded the Nobel prize, wrote briefly about this Indian poet, his fame in his own country, his family background, his earlier visit to England as a student when he made acquaintance with great English poets, and his work *Gitanjali*. For the popularity of these English verses the paper gave the following reason: 'No comparison can be made between his verse and that of Western poets, and it is doubtful if, even in his wonderfully apt translation, Mr. Tagore's poems would have found a ready appreciation in England were it not for the fact that in style they resemble, although they can not be said to equal, the familiar models of Oriental literature contained in the Bible.'

For *The Evening News* of the same date the award of the Nobel prize to Rabindranath 'is a wonderful reminder of the progress of our English tongue, and perhaps in its way also something of a refutation of Kipling's familiar dictum that 'East is East and the West is West, and never the twain shall meet.' Tagore belonged to a 'commonwealth in which Newman's motto *cor ad cor loquitur* is the sole password.' In rather tasteless piece of writing Tagore's father Debendra Nath Tagore was made 'a great friend of Queen Victoria.' It was Debendra Nath's father Dwarkanath to whom this friendship is generally attributed.

Like other British press reviews of Tagore the writer in *The Evening News* placed him in the tradition of lost Western mystic and passionate writing:

Written first in his native tongue of Bengal, they have been turned by their author into a measure that rather recalls Walt Whitman at his best, though his passionate lyrics are a far cry from Whitman. It is, of course, an odd style to Europe— to make nobler comparison it has in it a touch of the melody which belonged to the cowherd minstrel who left us the Psalms. Musician as well as poet— the comparison with the Psalmist again— Mr. Tagore set his heart-moving words to the airs that caught the imagination of his people, who sang them as our Northern forefathers sang the old ballads centuries ago.

Ernest Rhys, the first English biographer of Tagore wrote a thoughtful article 'Rabindranath Tagore' in the 14 November 1913 issue of *Everyman*. Like many others Rhys found Tagore's command of the language astonishing and in the English verses the real spirit of the original is extraordinarily well maintained. 'They are not translated, but transmuted,' Rhys wrote in great admiration.

Tagore as a poet of infinite beauty, vision and wonder was also a great philosophical thinker. Rhys discussed this aspect of him and referred to the series of discourses that he gave in England in the late 1912. Tagore brought the spiritual riches of the East and spoke in language intelligible to the West. Rhys came to know Tagore personally when

he was in England and found in him 'a most suitable envoy for the resolution of the long misunderstanding of East by the West.' Tagore was appalled by the gross materialism of the West, its fierce struggle for the immediate things—money and position—and brought the Eastern message which was contemplative, imaginative and looking for Nirvana. In Tagore's philosophy enshrined what the full realization of life means.

How did the press deal with the 'political' Tagore? He was a nationalist, a prophet of Indian nationalism, a patriot of great sensitivity. But he was not a 'political agitator' according to the *Aberdeen Free Press* of 17 November 1913. He aims 'at awakening the spiritual consciousness of his nation, and his belief is not that Britain and India are antagonistic but they are bound together and have a high destiny to fulfil in common.'

*The New Age* (20 November 1913) made a scathing attack on the Nobel Committee for its nomination of Tagore for the prize. The decision was 'ridiculous, and possibly the British Academy [which] has perfectly comprehensible spite against any living English,' had a hand in influencing the Committee's choice. Tagore's writing is not 'good English' nor 'good poetry', 'good sense' or 'good ethics'.

*The Daily Mail* (14 November 1913) was emphatic that the Nobel Prize for the Eastern poet was a vindication of the imperial connection: 'It is something new in our imperial history to get great literature in our own tongue from the East.'

*The Telegraph* (14 November 1913) sounded a note of caution. The positive response of English readers to Tagore's poems was due to the fact that 'in style they resemble, although they cannot be said to equal the familiar words of Oriental literature contained in the Bible'. The Indian poet should be appreciated for his wonderful prose-verse, but he should be measured carefully to find him the rightful place in the hierarchy of world literature.' Agreeing with *The Daily Mail*, *The Times* observed that the Prize was 'a wonderful reminder of the progress of our English tongue in India.'

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By December 1913 the British reading public had become familiar with the mystic poet from the East, with his writings as published so far in *Gitanjali*, *The Gardener*, *The Crescent Moon* and *Sadhana*. The news of the award of the Nobel prize had been published, analysed and dissected. Now interest focused on his other activities, on the man in his own Indian setting, on other members of his family, his educational work and so on.

On 14 December 1913 *The Observer* published an account of the felicitation by his countrymen on his award of the Nobel prize. Perhaps this was the first time that a reporter in India sent a despatch on Tagore for publication in England. The report described the beautiful scene of Santiniketan, the delightfully decorated road from the station (Bolpur) to the school. 'The scene was typically Hindoo, and the blowing of conch shells, the smell of burning incense, the mango groves, the picturesque robes, and the distant temple all added to the poetry of it.' Quoting the *Calcutta Statesman* the correspondent wrote, 'As he stood, we saw a truly Aryan sage. The neatly brushed flowing hair, the chiselled features, the erect handsome figure and the beautifully meditative eyes all combined to present a perfect picture of Aryan philosopher.'

In its issue of 24 December 1913 *Truth* discussed a book published in Swedish and German on the tour of Asia by Prince William of Sweden. He visited Calcutta and this visit, the Swedes have said, brought about the award of the Nobel prize to Rabindranath Tagore. French and other orientalist scholars opined that Tagore was hardly a typical oriental, but rather an Anglo-Indian hybrid—at any rate as a poet. In fanciful language was described the Prince's meeting with the members of the Tagore family:

An appointment was made in the evening. In answer to their knock at the door the grand portal was opened wide. Three men, robed in white, as Romans of old might have been, came forward in the feeble light of a lanthorn held by the central figure. They might have arisen from the catacombs, the Prince thought, after a sleep of seventeen hundred or more years. Their turbans, however, spoiled the effect. As soon as they had crossed the threshold the portal swung back. The three men led them up a palatial staircase to a well-ventilated, lighted, and spacious room where the conducting Hindoos and another, also in white, welcomed them in Oriental fashion. Cushions, encased in blue silk, lay piled on a matted floor. The shelves round the room held 20,000 books...

Rabindranath Tagore works in this room. Time out of mind the Tagore family have held a great place in India, and particularly Calcutta. A long series of eminent men rooted and widened their influence. Four brothers are now living. Two are leading jurists, one is a musician. The youngest is the poet. Their graciousness charmed the Royal tourist... Then entered a musician... [his music] were the lament of a whole people, formerly the masters of half Asia, and now slaves.

The Prince noted his host's loathing of British rule. 'In all my life, I never spent moments so poignant as at the house of the Hindoo poet Rabindranath Tagore.'

Reporting the above the British journalist criticised such writing: this account would not please the Tagores who [under British rule] 'enjoy a good time in Calcutta.'

Tagore's popularity with the reading public surprised the media. There was a tinge of jealousy when *The Daily Citizen* (3 January 1914) warned him: 'I hope Nobel prizes and much petting will not spoil him, and that he will drop a certain tendency to affection and return to the simplicity of his Gitan-jali[sic].'

*The Dundee Advertiser* (5 January 1914) published a long article under the title 'The Poet from Bengal Rabindranath Tagore and His Appeal to East and West.' In the paper's survey of authors who published in 1913 Tagore's name stood first, and he was hailed 'as the silver lining to our cloud in the sky of English poetical production.' The article wrote of his distinguished family, the award of Nobel prize, and his recent lectures at London, Oxford and Harvard. His *Sadhana* 'will give most pleasure to the ordinary intelligent reader of books.'

The British labour MP J. Ramsay Macdonald visited Tagore's school in Bolpur in 1913. He wrote an account of this visit in the 12 January issue of *The Daily Chronicle* which also appeared in *Public Opinion* (30 January 1914). Tagore's effort was praised. He pointed out that his institution had nothing to do with Government, 'their staff is not official, their system is not an enforced mechanical routine... there is no attempt made

to impose something foreign to uproot or to force: no necessity to guard alien methods by alien instructors.'

Macdonald thought it important to let the British public know that Tagore's school 'has been frowned upon, it has been put on the police blacklist; attempts have been made to suppress it; it has been the subject of threatening official circulars issued to parents, the persecution has only endeared it to its founder. It has been kept going at the cost of much sacrifice. Into its exchequer, Mr. Tagore has put not only the Nobel prize, but the royalties of his books.' The Labour MP concludes:

Everything [in Santiniketan] was peaceful, natural, happy And I went away to another world where worthy and well-meaning graduates from Oxford and Cambridge are toiling and perspiring like blacksmiths with heavy hammers to beat and bend the Indian mind into strange forms on strange anvils, and where there is unhappiness and sadness of heart - timorous whispers instead of laughter, doubt instead of hope.

In a general article, its first, *The Baptist Times and Freeman* (13 February 1914), reviewed Tagore's writings and the thought that they reflected. Tagore was 'a new mystical writer,' 'a second St. Francis whose insight into the child's heart (in *The Crescent Moon*) surpassed that of Blake and Stevenson. Tagore's poems permeated with Christian ideas (which is to be expected from a man from the Brahma Somaj) and truths, as these are of 'more arresting beauty because they have passed through a mind and civilisation so different from our own.' The paper was greatly pleased: 'We have been waiting anxiously for some indication of the effect of Christian ideas on a truly representative Hindu mind. Here surely, is the person we have been longing for - one sent before the chariot of Lord to make his path straight. And when we remember that this poet's every word is equally caught up by waiting millions, may we not venture to assert that the new, the Christian India, is already at the door?'

In a similar vein the respectable *The Spectator* (14 February 1914) reported that the modern Hindu Bengalis had absorbed and utilized the fruits of the Christian message - however much they declared (including Tagore) that 'India has nothing to learn from Europe on the spiritual side.' 'Tagore, undoubtedly, is a great and talented writer,' the reviewer continued, 'but to claim that the product was an unaided product of vedic inspiration was wrong. It veils a hostility and inexcusable ingratitude to Western teaching.' It was sad that 'Tagore's Western admirers ignored the fact of his debt to Western teaching.'

Rabindranath Tagore's school in Santiniketan, its teaching principles, its democratic arrangements received ungrudging praise from the British press - quite a few publishing firms had first hand impressions of the project. *The Daily Telegraph* (26 February 1914) highlighted one aspect of the School which, it thought, suitable for introduction here. '...all the housework, and even the washing, is done by pupils and masters—let us introduce that pleasing practice at Eton and the Council schools forthwith!'

By April 1914 the sales figures of the four translations of Tagore were: *Gitanjali* twenty-four thousand; (and selling steadily); *The Gardener*, nine thousand; *The Crescent Moon* seven thousand and *Sadhana* six thousand. Reporting these statistics *Western Daily Press* (11 April 1914) commented 'these would be notable sales for any books of pure literature. In all the circumstances they are probably without parallel.'

On 14 May 1914 *The Times Literary Supplement* reviewed four books of Tagore in one article. The books were *The Gardener*, *The Crescent Moon*, *Sadhana* and *Chitra*. The anonymous reviewer remarked that 'Although the popularity that caught him up in a flame (a popularity unfailingly registered by the Nobel Committee) is likely to fade as readily as it was aroused, yet it is, in spite of all its depressing accompaniments, a significant response to a new attitude towards life.' For the *TLS*, Tagore's popularity was due to the heartless science and philosophy which had made Western man soulless and dry—in this desert Tagore brought the mysticism of the East and demolished the separation of life into departments. There was a second aspect of this popularity. The poet was adept in conveying the Christian message 'in the spirit of Upanishads.'

In Rabindranath, the *TLS* writer continued, there were two sources of inspiration, Christ and Buddha, 'Christ more truly than Buddha.' His essays in *Sadhana* were unsatisfying, for his assertion of an attitude of certitude was uncalled for: 'We feel in *Sadhana* that if the writer were less content to be the teacher, and more eager to canvass experience, the better.' Even as a poet Tagore was unable to maintain the skill he displayed in *Gitanjali*. *The Crescent Moon's* child-poems are more childish than child-like.

*The King of the Dark Chamber* was published in May 1914. Reviewing the play in its issue of 15 June 1914, *The Globe* found in it 'the real poetical imagination.' In a rather moving passage the paper wrote:

... the allegory subtle and profound and yet simple, is cast into the form of a dramatic narrative, which moves with unconventional freedom to a finely impressive climax; and the readers who began in idle curiosity, finds his intelligence more and more engaged, until when he turns the last page, he has the feeling of one who has been moving in worlds not realised and communing with great if mysterious presences.

Equally moved was the *TLS* (18 June 1914) which remarked: 'The consolation, the refreshment of coming into contact with a mind like Tagore's is a privilege for which this age in the West should be grateful.' Reading the play the reviewer in *The Daily Chronicle* (22 June 1914) was reminded of 'the story of "Cupid and Psyche" as Apuleius told it, and as it has survived in the ever popular "Beauty and the Beast." 'But the story is told by Tagore with a grace of fancy that makes it his very own.' [Tagore] 'can throw in a moment a gleam upon human beings that all the labours and analyses and definitions of the mystical philosophers are powerless to reveal.' Similarly *The Scotsman* (22 June 1914) was moved by the Play for its flowing English style, an effective use of beautiful and suggestive imagery and allusion, and an underlying depth of spiritual significance. 'In the story of the *King of the Dark Chamber* was reflected a spirit similar to the Christian attitude of trust and belief in the power of Unseen, without demanding that all things shall be made visible to the eye of man.' For *The Daily Express* (2 July 1914), however, in the play there was displayed 'all the rich East flowing in magnificent splendour.'

*The Yorkshire Observer* (8 July 1914) sounded a different note:

Mr. Tagore's English admirers will probably find this mystical play a little disappointing. Not only is the theme of it alien to our ideas, and the meaning rather baffling in places, but the

## INTRODUCTION

language has little of the compelling beauty to which Mr. Tagore has accustomed us... The familiar moral of the superiority of the hidden and spiritual over the obvious and material is powerfully brought out, and there are deeper meanings which the reader finds somewhat elusive and uncertain.

*The Irish Times* (10 July 1914) found the English in *The King of the Dark Chamber* 'very commonplace and even vulgar.' Like *The Yorkshire Observer*, *The Irish Times* found the world of the King of the Dark Chamber 'wholly strange to Europeans, which it would be impossible for us fully to appreciate.'

Drama the play is not: poem it is not: true allegory it is not. It lives only by the lyric flames which destroy it. It lives, then, as a memory and not as a work of art to which the mind can return again and again, and always find refreshment and new vigour, and finer memories are one to be gained from Mr. Tagore's own works, those in which he is more truly because more actively himself,

Thus opined *The Manchester Guardian* in its issue of 16 October 1914.

The language and the thought process that came to be applied were fast becoming standardized and uniform. Thus his *The King of the Dark Chamber* is beyond comprehension: 'the unfathomly depth of this oriental mystery...much of the dialogue out of our world altogether.' For many reviewers the play was yet another example of the combination of Westernized thought process with Eastern mysticism and phraseology. The West loved Tagore for he reminded them of their own ancient tradition. Tagore is admired for his assimilation of Christian teaching with the best of Eastern wisdom and philosophy, for his simple and beautiful language. However, he must not stray too far from the path laid down for him. Obscure language, esoteric thought and a posture of teaching and preaching should be avoided. The West wanted to see in him the fruits of the wonderful work of Christian and missionary effort in India where British rule and civilization achieved so much. Tagore should tell the West of the mystic bond between Orient and Occident. Tagore's simplicity is praised; when he indulges in obscurantism he comes under severe criticism.

The West's imagined and constructed Rabindranath is nicely summed up by *The Athenaeum* 8 May 1915:

We admire Mr. Tagore greatly, as an artist to whose voice the world listens, and as one who is already bringing to his fellow-countrymen, as none but a great poet can do, the need of certain ideas on which Western life is founded, and which Eastern life has on the whole overlooked. It is because he is nearer to ourselves than any other Indian poets are that he has so deeply touched us, and we have the right to say that, if he is nearer to us, it is because he has, by conscious and unconscious processes, assimilated something of our standards and of the spirit of our literature.

Tagore's next publication *The Post Office*, translated by Devabrata Mukherjea, came out in September 1914. The play, as we noted earlier, had already been performed in London and Dublin. The *TLS* (15 October 1914) found in the play 'an impression of actuality, complete within the limits of human life as seen and heard in a real world.' *The Athenaeum* (7 November 1914) read the three plays of Tagore, *Chitra*, *The King of the Dark Chamber* and *The Post Office* together and found the last one most appealing. In

the two other plays 'the burden of message was disproportionate to the machinery devised to deliver it; characters and situations alike groaned under the weight of the ill-concealed transcendentalism.' In *Post Office*, however, 'the whole episode is one of child life; we have scenes, simply, from the illness and death of an imaginative child, and see them as he sees them; and while the symbolic idea is not obtruded, and does not, as we apprehend it, assume appropriate definiteness, the purely human interest is exquisitely sustained, and the management of such dramatic opportunities as simple situation affords is always happy.'

In 1915 Macmillan published Kabir's Poems translated by Rabindranath Tagore with an introduction by Miss Evelyn Underhill. Kabir was an Indian poet who lived in the fifteenth century. *The Observer* (7 March 1915) in its review of the book did not make any comment on the quality of translation; instead it introduced Kabir to the English readers as a great reconciler [who] 'wished to end the conflict between Hindus and Moslems by showing that each were seeking by their own means the same end.' The reviewer was pleasantly surprised finding Kabir's message was so similar to that of Samuel Butler and quoted a passage from the latter to prove his point.

For *The Birmingham Daily Post* (19 March, 1915) 'it [Kabir's poems] is a kind of mystical optimism that inspires his beautiful poems translated by Rabindranath Tagore in prose verse that remind us of the poetical works of the Bible.' *The Scotsman* (22 March 1915), recommending the book mentions that 'Kabir is fortunate in having a poet as his translator, and it is interesting to note the characteristic Tagore touches in many of the passages.'

*The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (3 April 1915) found the Kabir poems of 'an extremely mystical character, and may not suit the taste of all readers.' Yet their essential Christian sentiments were clear. 'But, though in form it may occasionally be unfamiliar and a little difficult, no reader of the English Bible, or even of George Herbert, can complain that in spirit the present work is too esoteric. In fact, neglecting the mere letter of it—symbols such as Brahma, the Guru, etc. —the Christian may find here an expression of his own faith and aspirations.' The paper had no difficulty in finding a place for the fifteenth century Indian poet, 'one with our own poets, e.g. Blake and Tennyson.' The conviction with which Kabir expresses himself reminded the reviewer of Herbert's 'quaintness and sincerity.'

The first biography of Rabindranath Tagore in English was published in 1915. It was written by Ernest Rhys, himself a poet. The book was widely reviewed by most of the well-circulated dailies and weeklies. *The Observer* (2 May 1915) thought that the book was written in a spirit of reverent enthusiasm and is full of information that it is good to know. In the book Rhys referred to Tagore's short stories, then not known to the English speaking world. A curious *The Observer* wrote: 'Let us hope that we shall all be given a chance soon of making their acquaintance.'

In a close reading of the book *The Birmingham Daily Post* (7 May 1915) found a number of flaws in the work. Rhys' 'style is occasionally rather obscure [for his] employment of Indian words and of allusions to things and persons strange to the general reading public.' *The Athenaeum* (8 May 1915) found that 'Mr. Rhys raises hopes which he

does not satisfy.' The biographer is criticized for his failure to explain the duties and responsibilities of an estate manager, a position which the poet once held. The paper was greatly surprised that Rhys wrote about the marriage of Tagore, his wife, and his children who died very young without ever mentioning their names: 'Mr. Rhys, in what he calls a "biographical study," disposes of Rabindranath's seventeen years of family life in two paragraphs and does not so much as acquaint us with the names of his wife and children.'

The *Pall Mall Gazette* (10 May 1915) concurs with this analysis in its review of Rhys. The biographer's labour was an essay in 'uncritical eulogy:' 'Some of us find it difficult to take Tagore seriously as an Eastern poet. His verse recalls Western models and masters...' In Tagore the writer finds evidence of a certain section of Indians 'becoming Westernised.' *The Daily Chronicle* (19 May 1915) attempts to put Tagore on an elevated position, emphasizing his role 'as a reformer with the mission to the world, and a healer too.' The reviewer expresses his satisfaction that 'it is under the strong shield of our Empire that the genius of this Bengali singer has found itself and flourished.'

A similar position was taken by other papers. For *The Standard* (1 June 1915), the Tagore poems were short in ideas, 'whether compelling or constructive.' Tagore has been unduly extolled by a group of Western critics, 'captured probably by the note of austere aloofness which dominates the man quite as much as his writings.'

In generally commending Rhys' 'little book,' the *TLS* (3 June 1915) once again foregrounds the virtues of the West in the context of East-West philosophical worldviews. It says that the notion that the East knows the unchanging secret of peace is facile. The West has a more complex society and culture; its advances in rationalistic science with increased command over all material means and a more realistic intellectual grasp of human history and human nature have thrown upon us a mass of problems which lay outside the horizon of the East till modern times. It is by no means true to say that the East has reached a finally satisfactory solution to the problems of life. Tagore is interesting because he shows how India is grappling with the spiritual struggle of modern India in its efforts to reconcile the various strains of religious thought, Eastern and Western.

*The Spectator* (26 June 1915), doubts Rhys' portrayal of Tagore as 'a pacifist of the Western type.' The man was possibly misunderstood by Mr. Yeats and other Celtic poets who failed to grasp 'the inner significance of the garden-house at Bolpur, or realise whither the Neo-Hinduism of Bengal is drifting.' However, the paper is relieved that Rhys steered clear of Indian politics in his biography! 'Most of us know that there are serious problems ahead, serious but not insurmountable, in the administration of India. Men of letters are, consciously or unconsciously, moulding the minds of young India, giving them a bent to this or that view of difficulties that await us and them. Let us at least be glad that, if Mr. Rhys has ventured into the still unexplored field of Bengali literature, he has kept clear of Indian politics.'

In June 1915 Rabindranath received a knighthood from the British crown. This was published as a news-item in *The Daily Mail*, *The Times* and *The Athenaeum* without comments. A provincial paper, *The Birmingham Gazette* (4 June 1915), however, gave some

prominence to the event publishing a full article with the title: An Indian Knighthood. It wrote : 'No award in yesterday's Honours List was worthier than the knighthood given to Rabindranath Tagore, the great and gracious Bengali writer described by one of the Viceroys as the Poet Laureate of Asia.' Interestingly a Woman's Journal *The Ladies' Field* (12 June, 1915) used the occasion to write on the poet for the first time. Tagore's 'all too few but infinitely delightful and imaginative volumes of verse have become cherished possessions of the connoisseur.'

By the end of 1915 it became clear that the media were becoming increasingly interested in Tagore's school in Bolepur. A number of articles were published on the subject, all highly praiseful of the project. In its issue of 10 December 1915 *The Public Opinion* published letters, which originally came out in the *Warrington Guardian*, which passed between a school teacher in north of England and Rabindranath on the latter's regard for teaching for 'the mental and spiritual faculties of the pupils.'

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In 1916, the amount and variety of press writings on Tagore fell drastically compared to the previous two years. The *TLS* (16 March 1916) noted the publication of a little book, *Maharani of Arakan* founded on the story of Sir Rabindranath Tagore by George Calderon. We recall that it was Calderon who adapted the play for performance in Britain and Ireland. The book's historical interest lies in the fact that in it we find articles by K. N. Dasgupta containing some extracts of past reviews of Rabindranath and his work. The *TLS* reviewer quotes approvingly the extract from Ramananda Chatterjee, editor of *Modern Review*, a Calcutta journal in English, in which were published many translations of the poet's work. For Tagore real bondage, Chatterjee seems to suggest, is not political but of 'cowardice and ignorance, of superstition, of customs, of authority, of priestcraft and of the letter of the Shastras.'

In the 2 May 1916 issue (1916) of *The Times Educational Supplement* the news of the imminent closure of Presidency College, a premier educational institution of Calcutta, was given. The *TES* had received a pre-publication copy of an article by Tagore on the subject. Rabindranath was much distressed and discomfited by the deteriorating relation between the young Indians and their English college teachers. Tagore wrote that the Englishmen's increasing dislike of Bengalis stood in the way 'for the latter to feel our reality.' The war provided for an opportunity for the Indian youth to serve as volunteers which was provided by the government. Such co-operation could have led to a claim of fairness from the rulers. He entreated for a relationship based on respect and reverence from the students and love and compassion from their English teachers. In its absence 'a distrust of all Englishmen will be transformed into an instinct from one generation to another.'

In 1916 Tagore visited the US and Japan. The news was recorded by *The Times* (18 September 1916) together with a Tagore poem which it published. *The Times Educational Supplement* (21 September 1916) published yet another account of Tagore's school in Santiniketan, this time by an Indian correspondent.

Two books, *Fruit-Gathering* and *Hungry Stones and Other Stories*, were published in 1916.

Reviewing *Fruit-Gathering*, *The Times Literary Supplement* (23 November 1916) lamented the absence of 'subtlety of rhythm' which the original Bengali is said to have contained. The reviewer wondered if instead of a prose translation, verse forms could not be achieved. 'In verse we might learn these poems the more easily by heart.' *The Irish Times* (9 December 1916) judged the book as less successful than *Gitanjali*. 'Tagore's allegiance to what seems to be his own verse-form has become a trifle monotonous.' Many of the poems contained 'beautiful thoughts,' but the negation of rhyme and metre, which at first gave his poems an effect of weird simplicity, has become a stumbling block.'

*The Nation* (23 December) thought that in spite of customary grace and spiritual insight, these poems 'impress us less than his first volume, for his manner seems to become slighter and more indefinite, and the likeness of poem to poem is so great that when one has read a few one seems to have read all.'

*The Manchester Guardian* (19 February 1917) found that Tagore's translation was less successful: 'far oftener than not the English gives us nothing of that clear definition which is the very essence of poetry.' It continued: 'Enveloped in a heavy vigour that is sometimes somnolent, sometimes active, but always shapeless.' There are no doubt 'a few exquisite' and profound parables in *Fruit-Gathering*—yet overall a failure. The paper made a general point about translation:

... that his books in English are great books it is idle to pretend. The English people have bought nearly a hundred thousand of them in four years. It is hoped that they have bought them for few clear-cut excellences that tell us surely of a great Indian poet who can speak to us only in a phrase here and there, and not for the mists of platitude into which his genius for the most part falls in translation ....

The translation of the first batch of Tagore's short stories were heartily welcomed. The *TLS* (23 November 1916) found in the selection pictures of 'many sides of modern Indian life and thought... Some [stories] are allegorical, some delightfully comic;' one unfortunately 'is more than a little disturbing in its revelation of what Indian people think about British rulers.' All in all, however, like his other works, Rabindranath's short stories 'light up the dark corners of the strangeness, which separates East from West, and brings the reader closer to the common humanity while exhibiting clearly the differences in spiritual and practical standard.'

*The Daily Telegraph* (29 November 1916) also found the stories in the *Hungry Stones*, 'moving and embellished with imagery of a delicate and distinctive character.' As studies of Bengali life 'most of the tales are weirdly engaging,' although because of their unknown background might not appeal to all English people.

*The Inquirer* (9 December 1916) reviewer found in the stories (as in 'Tolstoy's short stories) 'parables of spiritual things without losing their tender human appeal.' In a lengthy article reviewing Tagore's *Hungry Stones* and *Fruit-Gathering*, *The Nation* (22 December 1916) reflected on how India was portrayed for the generations of British people. It was writers like Macaulay, Thackeray, Max Muller and Kipling who moulded the public opinion on India. It was Max Muller who depicted India as a sacred land of the intellectual Hindu Brāhman caste. The English people were taught that Indians were sages and metaphysicians. What they were not told was that 'the singularity of the Indian mind

may lie not at all in any over-powering intellectual gift, but on the contrary, on its emotional side.' Thanks to Tagore's short stories the readers can now understand the 'Indian modes of feeling.' 'In all these tales, some romantic, some decorously comic, some gently satiric, and others tragic and moving, the arresting thing is less the art of the writer than his revelation of the delicacy and power and purity of Indian emotion.' This emotion which is the characteristic of Indian life was unknown to the West, 'the reason, we suppose, that the home life of India was closed to us, partly to our own prejudices and partly by the *Zenana*.' Tagore has given the English reader an entry to the 'Eastern home life behind the veil.' The stories are of ordinary people: 'These people are evidently not intellectual giants, but they have a quick natural gift of emotion which make our Western life of the feelings seem crude and poor, and a little vulgar by comparison.' *The Sunday Times* (31 December 1916) also expressed its delight at 'admission to the domestic interior of Hindusthan' which Tagore stories opened for them.

So far there was hardly any reference to the political Rabindranath in the British press writing on him. His Westernisation was focused and valorized. His absorption of Christian thought was highly praised. That Tagore, from an early age, was involved in the nationalist movement was not conveyed to the British public by the press. There were many articles 'introducing' him to the West routinely itemizing his aristocratic background, his grounding in English literature, his journeys to the West, his refined, almost Christian mystic spirituality. There was total silence on his leading role in the Swadeshi and anti-partition movement of 1905, his patriotic writings, his views against British imperialism. Indeed, Rhys, the first English biographer of Tagore, was praised for not discussing Tagore's politics in his book. *The Times*, as early as in 1912, advised Tagore and his followers not to mix art with politics. Events in 1916 and thereafter changed all that.

On 8 December 1916 *The Daily Chronicle* published the following under the rather tasteless title, 'The Hun and Tagore':

A literary item of news finds its way here from Germany, via America. It is that Rabindranath Tagore's play, "Chitra," has recently been produced in Berlin. As those who have read it will know, it deals with the Feminist movement in India. Tagore must feel himself highly honoured by the unasked patronage of the Prussian. He will also recall the words of another poet "The Prussian eagle's beak is red."

*The Times*, on 2 January 1917 published the news that Tagore had gone to Japan the previous year where in an address to students he had denounced the Western civilization. He had made an appeal to Japan to reject the 'spirit of the civilisation which is sowing broadcast over all the world seeds of fear, greed, suspicion, unashamed lies of its diplomacy, and unctuous lies of its profession of peace and goodwill and the universal brotherhood of man.'

Suddenly, for the West an unknown Rabindranath was unmasked. A mystic, other-worldly Tagore proved to be a transgressor, a rebel, a critic of all that Western civilization stands for. This character of the man increasingly began to irritate the press media and other opinion formers.

Meanwhile, *Stray Birds*, a book of verse described by one reviewer as a 'collection of epigrams and apothegms' was published. Only a few papers reviewed the book, but the

comments were all unreservedly positive. For *The Scotsman* (19 February 1917) [the writings] 'reveal strikingly the author's ability to penetrate behind the veil of outward appearance to inner meaning of material and spiritual things.' *The Daily Mail* (7 February 1917) found the work 'characterised by some gentle detached philosophy and the same facility of expression as Sir Rabindranath Tagore's former works.' *The Era* (2 February 1917) was rapturous in its eulogy: 'Tagore [is] at his best, indeed, if he had not already created "sensation" some years back, this would deservedly be the most-talked-of book of the season.'

For analogy *The Spectator* (24 March 1917) went deep into Hebrew religious text: 'The book resembles nothing so much as Hebrew Wisdom literature. It consists of disjointed sayings pregnant with short flights of wise rhetoric. He has written this time for the many, for busy people with no appetite for the dreams which ravish the intellectual few. He has come into the everyday world to speak to ordinary people.'

*The Cycle of Spring*, the translation of a Tagore drama, was less well received. *The Times Literary Supplement* (1 March 1917) merely reported the publication of the book without any comments of its own. *The Spectator's* (24 March 1917) reviewer admitted his inability 'to attach any definite meaning to the poem as a whole.'

*The Manchester Guardian* (16 April 1917) was pleased finding in the work 'an inexhaustible wealth of song and lyric dialogue. But the theme is conveyed with delightful versatility of dramatic resource; wit and humour, sarcasm and irony, all good-natured ... The whole little drama is a spring-gift such as England has seldom received.'

Another provincial paper, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (30 April 1917), found in the style a drama form that was prevalent in Europe in the 16-17 sixteenth-seventeenth century: 'It is a work to which the old term 'Masque' would apply more accurately than any other. It is a piece of joyous symbolism in dramatic form and the idea it expresses is that of the recurring eternal rejuvenation of nature and humanity. The great Indian poet has written nothing less distinctly Indian, but nothing more essentially poetic.'

Theodore Maynard, writing in the *New Witness* (31 May 1917), was nearly vicious in his attack on Rabindranath. The poet was addressed as 'our industrious babu' (presumably for his prodigious amount of writing) who wrote, 'like [our] Martin Tupper, endless moralising free verses'. It [*Stray Birds*] was 'nothing less and nothing more than proverbial philosophy,' his *Cycle of Spring* was 'incoherent and confused,' his 'lyrics monotonous.'

Tagore's second book of essays, *Personality*, a collection of six lectures he gave in the United States, was published in London in 1917. The lectures were on unfamiliar subjects; *What is Art?* *The Personality*, *The Second Birth*, *Meditation*, *Woman* and *My School*. Tagore was critical of modern technology and its philosophy of power and covetousness, and pleaded for an inner search for man's personality which alone would unite him with God, the Supreme Personality.

In a long article *The Times Literary Supplement* (31 May 1917) gives a fair summary of Tagore's thoughts on these subjects and points out certain disaffinities with the Western thinking on these issues.

What we seem to miss in this book is the joy of going on; even the mere joy of going on. This is absent partly because tentative justice has already been done to it in a chapter on *Sadhana*.

But it is absent also because, at bottom, just as England does not quite understand a life of contemplation, or even a contemplative period of life, so India is not quite in sympathy with a mere life of action... India places the Brahman above the Kshatriya, and we have only to translate these by priest and warrior to see how difficult it would be for us to accept the estimate. ... Indians are still thinking in medieval categories, like sturdy yeomen who till their own lands; and in that lies the glamour of their scholarship, art and religion; whereas in England every rood of soil of thought has long undergone intensive cultivation, and there is little room now for any but landlords and labourers, encyclopaedists and specialists... The one might remember that Heaven helps those who help themselves, and the other not forget for the sake of life the causes of living.

For *The Times Educational Supplement* (7 June 1917) Tagore's ideas were completely alien to Western life-philosophy: '... interesting though these are [Rabindranath's thoughts], they are barely intelligible except to one who knows the Indian ways and manner and mind, who can sympathize with their outlook and admire wholeheartedly their great ideals.'

*The Baptist Times and Freeman* (15 June 1917) read in *Personality* a different message: '...the book is of great value as a product of Indian religion purified by Christian morality.' A beginning has been made in India and it is time 'to lead them on, from that point, to the fullness of our Christian faith.'

Laurence Binyon, writing for *The Manchester Guardian* (21 July 1917) thought that:

This little book has the great merit of setting us to think for ourselves; it communicates faith; and it has things to say to us which at the present moment it behoves us well to ponder... We may beat the Germans materially, but that there will be the danger that in the world of ideas they may prevail through our adopting their aims... We hear much admiring talk of organisation and efficiency; and it is well that we should listen to a warning voice like that of Tagore, which insists on the human values in life, and reminds us that "organisation," the ideal of an age of science, may become a horrible idol, and that we must look beyond it, and hold fast to the truth that the real function of organisation is to liberate the human soul.

In the earliest encounter Rabindranath Tagore was constructed as a seer from the East by the literary establishment in England--no doubt with some complicity from the Indian students then in the country. This seer was regarded as one who was able to absorb the spirit of Christian mysticism and transform his own Hindu self. The poet was expected to play this role and be a mediator of what was best in the West and East. Increasingly, however, thus constructed, the man failed to live up to their expectation and said things unduly critical of West and unacceptably eulogistic about the East. As his philosophy and life-mission unfolded for the West, he was found unwanting, unfriendly and unwelcome. Macmillan's selection from the vast and varied work of Tagore foreground and secure for him a place as a Messenger from the East soon turned out to be counterproductive. When it let the other Tagore to speak in *Sadhana* and *Personality*, the critics were largely unsympathetic, in many cases hostile and offensive.

The English translation (*My Reminiscences*) of Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali autobiography touched a different chord with the reviewers in the dailies and weeklies.

They found the intimate story of a man in his domestic setting a pleasure to read and enjoy. Not only did the book bring the 'real' Tagore to the view of the English, it served a bigger purpose in evidencing how English learning and English ways helped develop a personality, outwardly Hindu, but deep down a devout Christian mystic.

*The New Statesman* (4 August 1917) read the book as an interesting story of the development of a young person under the aegis of English influence in the then Bengal:

It [his autobiography] shows Tagore to be, not a typical figure, the Eastern or Indian poet, but a Bengali poet and a member, moreover, of a generation which learnt largely and eagerly from English literature. When he appeared as a representative of the East he caused some disappointment by being insufficiently Oriental; or else his admirers made themselves look foolish by discovering in him Oriental traits that were not there or were long familiar in English poetry. His reputation was to suffer either way. There never was much Eastern mysticism in Tagore; but so long as his readers looked for it and failed to find it, they were puzzled and more than half-inclined to suspect a deeper mystery than ever.

Refreshingly, the reviewer, argued that Tagore should be read on his own merit, and not by means of comparison with Western poets:

It is not until we cease to look in Tagore for a poet different in kind from our own poets that we can expect to appreciate him justly. [he is] not the general interpreter of a whole people.

Those who called him the Shelley of Bengal were not very exact epigrammatists.

But some did compare *My Reminiscences* with other works of the same genre. For *The Sunday Times* (23 July 1917) 'these 'memory pictures' have an atmosphere of very domestic reality about them, in that respect at least resembling the youthful recollections of William Butler Yeats.' *The Spectator* (25 August 1917) was reminded of 'Yoshio Markino's When He was a Child.'

Reviewing *My Reminiscences*, *The Nation* (25 August 1917) raised an interesting question. Why did Tagore not write originally in English? The answer suggested was that to be able to write in English (not merely translate from another language) one must give up his nativeness, his origin. Joseph Conrad was successful writing such classics as *Typhoon* and *Heart of Darkness*, because he gave up his Polish. 'had he not abandoned Polish altogether, he would hardly have been able to write.' Tagore, however, 'is a Bengali to the heart. His genius is not akin to the English in any important respect. The English language cannot be said to have provided him with a spiritual home. That is why he cannot express himself, but can only imitate himself, in English.'

The reviewers were pleasantly surprised with two unknown qualities of his writing. For *The Outlook* (8 July 1917) 'it is quite unlike other biographies, in that it deals entirely with impressions and ideas, and not with facts and dates.' *The Morning Post* (20 July 1917) wrote in praise: '... a selection of pictures in remembrance cunningly composed and passion-tinged, which the unseen, ever-busy painter is always making for us—for you and me at this very moment.' *The Nation* (25 August 1917) was pleased to discover humour in Tagore: 'Not many readers would have expected that the author of *Gitanjali* possessed so pretty a vein of humour as appears in some of these stories.'



*Nationalism* which was published soon after the highly acclaimed *My Reminiscences* proved to be not only a great irritant for many reviewers, the book effectively brought to an end the image of an emollient Tagore for the British. Like other books of essays *Nationalism* was the product of a series of lectures given by Rabindranath. In these talks Tagore criticizes the philosophy of nationalism as ingrained in modern Western civilization and its imitation in emerging Japan and colonial India. He warns India not to be diverted from its path of social and spiritual advance to that of political imitation.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (13 September 1917) was highly critical about 'the protest of a seer'. It wrote :

Sir Rabindranath here passes judgement [on] nothing less than the mass of activities and tendencies and standard of values which constitute the modern world...[the English reader] will be aware of a general repugnance to western civilisation on its political and industrial side...

The reviewer found in *Nationalism* a number of deficiencies—his confusion between nation and state, his stretched comparison between Britain and Germany, his glaring omission to prescribe an alternative to Western civilization (which Japan and India are moving into), and, for his lack of originality. Nation embraces a single tradition expressed in a common language, a common literature, a common body of customs and memories of things done or suffered together. For nation men are willing to die, not the mere state which is an organised political system. Rabindranath's criticism of the modern state, the *TLS* opined, was more applicable to Germany than Britain 'the British State does not present the appearance of an organization crushing individual liberty.' Tagore, the paper noted, had no guidance to offer to the immediate practical problems. 'If we ask what Sir Rabindranath would like to substitute for the present regime in India or how the economic needs of mankind are now to be supplied without a complete industrial organization, we get no answer.' Lastly, Tagore's criticism of Western materialism was derivative: 'in his formulation of them and in his reading of the facts of the Western world he has been not a little influenced by Western seers and critics[like] Wordsworth and Ruskin.' The *TLS* took up another subject discussed in *Nationalism*, viz. British rule of India. While he was 'no admirer of British rule,' Tagore's critique of Indian nationalism—was welcome. Given 'the fatal divisions of Indian Society, the exclusiveness of castes, the oppression of Indian by Indian' 'the way Indian nationalists would go is not India's true path.'

*The New Witness* (27 September 1917) found 'the greater part of the book is padding', 'a mere welter of words.' On Tagore's conception of Nationality it wrote:

the nation to him is only a mechanical organization for conquest and gain, 'all stomach and no heart.' Can he not see that exploitation has nothing to do with national life, but is the offspring of the union between capitalism and cosmopolitan finance... A nation is a conscious and united association of men who are prepared to defend their liberties with their lives.

*The Spectator's* (13 October 1917) reading of *Nationalism* was sceptical and jestful: 'Surely

his humorous enjoyment of paradox must have been keen when he delivered the three lectures.' Tagore misleads, 'takes his audience as ignorant about India, his glib assertion [is] that India is a non-nation being neither greedy nor oppressive. He forgets the aggressive Marathas and Sikhs.' The paper finds Rabindranath 'a shrewd Bengali.' He is remarkably courageous and outspoken; he possesses the instinctive tact in sizing up the foreigners he meets. In Rabindranath's arguments in this book are reflected all that is wrong with Bengal and Bengalis. 'Bengal is still evasive of control and education, by inertia, by odd assumptions of philosophic or spiritual superiority, in short, by just such whimsical and ingenious arguments we find skillful and at times impressive statement in these characteristically clever lectures.' The book *Nationalism* is not to be taken seriously, the paper concluded:

We need not perhaps take too serious a view of a poet's whimsical and partly humorous incursion into a field with which he is not familiar. Perhaps these lectures are only the Eastern counterpart of a sentimental journey, the half-smiling, half-pettish records of the likes and dislikes of a man of genius, whose lightest thoughts find ready and rather irresponsible expression through a pen which can write two languages with equal ease and felicity.

*The Yorkshire Post* (7 November 1917) was saddened by the transformation of a man who was a sage and whose voice was calm:

they [the essays] are not written in that calm, beautiful spirit which his other writings have taught us to expect in any book from his pen. The passion of the lectures does not move us as does the passion of his poems, it rather repels... there is a touch of querulousness about it. His solution to the problems of Western civilization and nationalism is a trifle vague.

By 1917 altogether thirteen books of Rabindranath were published in Britain. The selection however from his vast and varied writing remained narrow and careless, translations often poor and patchy—the whole project driven by immediate monetary gains of the parties involved—all these contributed to Tagore's rapid decline in popularity with the reading public and the increasing coldness of the press. Two other publications of the year, *Sacrifice and Other Plays* and *Mashi and Other Stories* failed to attract much attention of the dailies and weeklies. Reviewing the first, *The Manchester Guardian* (27 November 1917) found Tagore's English was dead today; reviewing the other the same paper wrote: 'stories may sometimes seem remote, and to Western sense, lacking in sharpness of edge... some of the pieces hardly more than formal or trivial.' Only the stories, 'Mashi' and 'Post Master,' stood out being 'exquisite and humane.'

The momentous events of 1919, the massacre at Jalianwala Bag, and Tagore's renunciation of knighthood in protest were not focused by the press. Only *The Times* (19 June 1919) recorded Tagore's 'request to be relieved of his knighthood.' That the request was not conceded was announced in its issue of 2 August 1919. No other paper wrote anything on the subject.

Was Tagore's audacity, affront to royalty, the cause of his second novel in translation, *The Home and the World*, failing to attract the attention of the Press? Only one publication, a sectarian one, *The Church Times* (1 August 1919) reviewed the book. *The Home and the*

*World* is 'a systematic picture of modern India; the central theme is Bimala; she may stand as typical of our native land, half emancipated from the bondage of ancestral traditions; easily infatuated by ideas, liable to be swept off her feet by blind enthusiasm for Swadeshi; Sandip embodies the philosophy of Bolshevism, Syndicalism and Sinn Fien—a most eloquent Babu, a most unpleasant villain.'

Inevitably the question of Tagore's 'rightful' place in the hierarchy of Western writers was raised:

[Dostoevsky] ... not that there is any similarity between the two artists; one might as well compare a cathedral organ to a flute—the great Russian, moreover, has the background of a deep Christianity. But all Orientals and their ideal of human excellence is in many ways the same.

In 1920 Tagore visited England, France, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Austria and Czechoslovakia. He also visited the United States, the compelling reason being, in his own words, 'They must listen to ...the East.' He returned to India in July next year, after an absence of nearly fourteen months. The British Press, particularly *The Times*, followed the poet's journey with interest publishing his itineraries, commenting briefly on his lectures and other activities in Europe.

In its issue of 13 November 1920 *The Times* informed its readers that *The King of the Dark Chamber* would be produced in Frankfurt-on-Main: 'this is the first occasion on which a long play by Tagore has been attempted in a European Theatre.' In later issues his visit to Germany, his meeting with Princess Bismarck, the proposed institution of a German library in Santiniketan were reported. In Copenhagen Tagore's reception was crowned by 'a torchlight procession by students to his [the poet's] hotel,' we read in *The Times* of 24 May 1921.

Apart from mere recording of Tagore's tour of Europe and America a number of papers commented on his lectures and activities during this journey to the West. *The Nation and the Athenaeum* of 17 December 1921 writing (by Padraic Colum) on the 1920 'season of lectures' in America, referred to the recent visit there by Rabindranath;

Last year Rabindranath Tagore did not come anywhere near making the success that the memory of his previous visits should have helped to bring him. This was because he was supposed to advocate – not in public – Indian independence. Let not the Britisher suppose that this amounts to evidence of American friendship for the British Empire! If it had been suggested that Tagore advocated freedom for the Moors the suggestion would have had something of the same effect. Americans are instinctively against any sort of overturn. Their own state was founded on revolution and their own heroic memories go back to revolution, but they are the last people in the world to take kindly to the idea of political or social struggle.

The British Press in general was surprised to see that Tagore had become very popular in Europe and tried to account for his so hearty and warm reception. *The Observer* correspondent from Vienna (26 June 1921) reported:

I cannot remember any living poet who has been received with such unanimous and profound reverence and praise by the Vienna public and press, or who has made such deep impression by his personal appearance as this great Bengali writer and thinker. At the Grosser Konzerthausaal

Tagore recited a number of his poems ... [these] were found very beautiful in sound ... their remarkable hymn-like rhythms being much admired.

While some of the daily papers noticed the present vogue of Rabindranath Tagore in Germany, *The Birmingham Mail* (2 September 1921) supplied one measure of his popularity: 'When he [Tagore] was in Berlin his publishers had placed order for 1,000,000 kilogram—more than 2,000,000 pounds—of paper for his books. That was enough for 3,000,000 volumes.' Accounting for his popularity in Europe 'as a prophet, a philosopher, a poet-seer,' *The Daily Mail* (13 March 1922) surmised that this was due to the fact the people on the continent 'were tired of materialism and were in quest for a wider, fuller life and a more real human brotherhood' which Rabindranath seemed to have offered them.

In 1921 two plays of Tagore were staged in London. These were noticed by a handful of papers. The second play, *Trial by Luck*, was found by *The Daily Chronicle* (24 October 1921) 'simple' and 'delicate.' *The Daily Telegraph* (24 October 1921), however, raised a general point on the performance of Indian plays in Britain:

It is a matter of serious doubt whether the performance of Indian plays ... are really worth the pains and the money expended on them. Experience of these productions shows increasingly that we do not get in the English versions anything of the quality which make them to be acclaimed on all hands as the literary masterpieces in their original tongue.

Of Tagore's *Trial by Luck*, the paper thought it 'a simple little tale on the *Christopher Sly*, model. 'The little play has enjoyable moments, but it would be better still in story form'.

In November 1921 was published the second English biography, a slim volume of one hundred pages, by Edward J. Thompson who was Principal of Wesleyan College, Bankura, Bengal. Thompson had two advantages over Rhys, Tagore's first biographer. He knew Bengali, and had longer acquaintance with Tagore through his many visits to Santiniketan.

The first review of the book appeared in *The Christian World* (3 November 1921). The writer, in discussing the book, asked: 'How far is Rabindranath Tagore a Christian?' The reviewer, quoting Thompson, wrote 'that Tagore himself has denied any influence of Bible on his *Gitanjali*, having never read the text. However, according to Thompson, this was not the whole truth. Rabindranath was indeed influenced by Christian thought: 'What is best in *Gitanjali* is an anthology from the ages of Indian thought and brooding; but it was the sun of Christian influence that has brought these buds into flower.'

*The New Statesman* (14 January 1922), welcoming the book, endorsed Thompson's view that Tagore had been portrayed in the West one-sidedly. Instead of the multiplex creativity of the man the West had come to know him only as a 'dreamer of a single attitude and mood.' Unknown still to the West were his energetic variety and vivid response to the life of the world. The paper also praised the author [Thompson] for bringing to light for the first time the political Tagore—his part in the national movement and his opposition to Curzon's plan (1905) to divide Bengal.



Increasingly in the 1920s the political Tagore gained ascendancy over the poetical Tagore in the West. In 1921 *The Times* (6 January 1921) had reported his views on the League of Nations as both 'League of Vagabonds' and 'League of Robbers.' Again in the same year Tagore said in London that 'Western civilization was of no benefit to native states,' and was duly reported in *The Morning Post* of 9 April 1921. The Tagore-Gandhi debate on Indian independence was eagerly watched by the British press. Writing on 'The Real Tagore,' *The New Statesman* (14 January 1922) assured its readers that 'an erstwhile Sin Feiner has changed his views, and his recent protest against M. K. Gandhi over the latter's Non-cooperation strategy showed a complete blending in him [Tagore] of the East and West.'

*The Fugitive*, 'a series of prose-poems, dramatic sketches,' was published in late 1921. The book, noticed only by a few periodicals, was generally ignored by the more widely read journals. *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (25 January 1922) found the book 'very curiously arranged,' 'the prose poetry [is] never quite English,' and while not denying that 'he is a thinker of subtlest order,' 'his rhythm is too often prosaic.' *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (8 December 1921) let be known that it was [becoming] 'tired of this sort of thing' [which is] 'becoming overdone.' For yet other papers there was 'rhythmic monotony,' 'uttering most trivial commonplaces and platitudes.' Tagore often 'loses himself in a haze of words when he has nothing much to say.' For *The Sunday Times* (4 December 1921), however, for all its tunes being 'in the same key' the work in general 'will not be unworthy to stand with *Gitanjali*.'

Rabindranath's next publication in English, *The Creative Unity*, was rather more widely commented on by the Press throughout the country. It appears that the media was focusing its attention on Tagore the essayist where he was polemical. Indeed, for *The Saturday Review* (1 April 1922) Tagore's poetry was 'untranslatable'—'this work of essays [is] more valuable than the entire collection of poetical works.' *The Observer* (16 April 1922), on the other hand, thought 'lecturing [the basis of the present work] has dulled Tagore's sense of poetry and sense of humour.'

*The Creative Unity* is a collection of ten essays centred around a common theme. Much misunderstanding and recrimination between the East and West have kept them apart. As a way out of this impasse Rabindranath Tagore suggests the foundation of a University (which he will start in his Santiniketan) that will bring students and scholars from West and East who will study philosophy, literature, art and music in an atmosphere of mutual respect and interchange.

*The Creative Unity* evoked diverse responses. To quote *The Saturday Review* again: 'They are the interpretation of an alien and antique philosophy by one who deeply understands the process of our mind. The aloofness of the Oriental enables him to solve the problem of the artist's attitude to his art in a manner we, blinded by the mists of our energy, are not capable of.' Tagore's criticism of the West has made him overlook the many positive contributions the latter has made in modern time. He is also oblivious of the inequities

that exist in his own country and society. Similarly he is silent on the good work of Europe in Africa. Tagore erroneously denies the West its 'essential spirituality.' *The Sunday Times* (23 July 1922) reminds him of the 'deep fission between the Mohammedan and Hindu in his own society.' 'He should also be aware of the evil of caste and purdah that disfigures India,' the paper concluded.

*The Christian World* (27 April 1922) tries to gauge the psyche of the man who wrote this book and detects a sense of betrayal on his part:

What really makes the book important (to students of Tagore and India, at all events) is its revelation, in passages constantly occurring, of Tagore's present attitude towards the West. Briefly, that attitude is one of irritation and impatience. In the past this poet has drawn gladly from Western thought and culture, and has interpreted the West to the East as he has interpreted the East to the West. The political events of the last few years, however, seem to have been too much for him. The Western spirit, he fears, with its mechanical and material collectivism, is killing the free impulse of individualism and humanity.

*The Christian World* (27 April 1922) finds Tagore's views all 'very general and exaggerated onslaught.' *The Observer* (16 April 1922) agrees: '[Tagore] makes statements, [there is] not enough arguments.' *The Sunday Times* (23 July 1922) finds what Rabindranath says [is] 'simple enough in theory but lacks practicality as to how unity, synthesis [is] to be achieved.'

*The Irish Times* (28 April 1922) takes Tagore to task for his attitude to women. It comments: 'A great deal of wrong and loss can shelter behind his simple ruling that "woman has to be ready to suffer."' To advise a sex to be content with it would be ludicrous if one did not know the dread reality in all countries and ages against which women have suffered.'

As we have seen during the 'twenties the popularity of Tagore rose in Europe. At the same time it declined in Britain. In its issue of 22 December 1922 *John O' London's Weekly* suggested that 'at one time there was an English "boom," almost a cult, in the writings of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. The War interfered with it, however, and it may never gather the same force again.'

Tagore's *Gora*, a novel published in 1924, was not widely reviewed. In a two sentence notice *The New Statesman* (2 February 1924) finds that the novel depicts 'an unattractive picture (probably unfair) of the Bengali and the reader's belief in the subtlety and wisdom of the orient suffers accordingly.'

Both *The New Leader* (15 February, 1924) and *The Times Literary Supplement* (28 February 1924) thought that the established canons of literary criticism were inapplicable to Indian novels and they should not be judged as such. In Tagore's novel the emphasis is on dialogue, debate, discussion, inner life of thought and there is less on scenery, events, and drama. Rabindranath Tagore is a thinker before he is a novelist, and the book reflects that trait.

The next publication, *Red Oleanders* (1925), described as 'dramatic poetry,' suffered a worse fate. Faced with severe and unkind criticism of the work Tagore felt compelled to send a rejoinder to *The Manchester Guardian* which was published on 28 August 1925. The burden of the adverse comments in the Press was that 'its symbolism was unfathomable,

its prose was undistinguishable, and the style suffered from vagueness.' *The Times Literary Supplement* (9 July 1925) wrote:

...For the greater part of the time, it is quite impossible to discover what is happening ... the characters of the play are sufficiently lifeless to compel one to wonder what intellectual or moral purpose they can possibly serve.

On the style *TLS* has this to say:

The most acute of Tagore's literary failings is perhaps a rather unbridled passion for metaphor. In 'Red Oleanders' the profusion of metaphor is particularly trying. Now and again there is a happy phrase or image, but the constant stream of picturesque likenesses incurs an obvious suspicion. It is to be feared that Tagore has been far more occupied with mere words than it is the business either of the dramatist or the poet to be.

*The Dublin Evening News* (22 July 1924) found the drama 'vague' where 'shadowy figures, indecisively male or female, meander through pages, uttering, pseudo-Maeterlinckian platitude.' Even one merit of Maeterlinck—its crystal clearness (as, for example in *Les Aveugles*)—Tagore's new drama lacks.

*The Scotsman* (23 July 1925) echoes in a similar view: '...its characters come and go off the stage without doing anything that forms a plot.' A minor provincial paper, *The Southport Guardian* (20 January 1926) was nearer the mark when it described the play as Tagore's 'political parable,' but admitted its inability to foreground the allegorical message or defining its metaphysical or political meaning as 'the drama never gets clear of the atmosphere.'

In reply Tagore agrees that the book's quality is not for him to judge. But what he cannot accept is the allegation of incomprehensibility or vagueness of the work. *Red Oleanders* has a definite meaning :

I am not competent to say how Europe herself feels about this phenomenon (the power and ruthlessness of impersonal organisation) produced by her science ... But I can say on behalf of the inarticulate Asia what a terrible reality the West is for us whose relation to ourselves is so little human. The view that we can get of her in our mutual dealings is that of a titanic power with endless curiosity to analyse and know, but without sympathy to understand, with numberless arms to coerce and acquire, but no serenity of soul to realise and enjoy (*The Manchester Guardian*, 28 August 1925)

Given this unequal and unfriendly relation that exists today between Europe and the rest of the world :

It should cause no surprise to anybody if a poet belonging to a continent swallowed up by the menacing shadow of Europe gives a prominent place among the dramatis personae of this play to an apparition which so powerfully occupies the imagination of a vast world consisting of non-Western races. It is not an individual, but a doom...

In a deeply felt personal note the poet continued :

I can assure my reader that I never meant to use this book as propaganda. It is a vision that has come to me in the darkest hour of dismay.

His faith in the essential goodness of human nature remained unshaken. The poet's hope is that some day woman's uncorrupted heart would restore the human from the unholy spirit of rapacity.

Is it the ingrained sense of self-righteousness of the Western critics that they failed to read the core meaning of *Red Oleanders*? It is revealing that *The Manchester Guardian* (28 August 1925) found it important to write editorially on the subject on the same day that it published Tagore's letter. The paper accepts the poet's criticism of the 'massive materialism of the West,' but promptly reminds him that there are many European thinkers who hold similar views. In truth, the Editorial continued, since the day of Antigone the struggle of the little man against the powerful big man had gone on and still continues. In this war both the East and West are implicated: 'We share a common burden, and we should equally be at pains to prevent the organisation of man from becoming the brutalisation of man.' While admitting the special pain of the East under the bondage of imperialism of the West, the ever increasing plight of all humanity under the 'Leviathan's pressure' is a fact which 'affect[s] us all.' The debate, for the time being, remained inconclusive.

The next book, *Broken Ties and Other Stories* (1925), did not fare better either. It appears that when Tagore published his poems on universal themes like God, love or nature, these through narrowness of selection, indifferent translation and over familiarity through repetition, come under the critics' harsh treatment. When he is more specific and writes in intimate language of Bengali domestic and social life, the ever busy commentators, reluctant to expend some intellectual effort to engage with another culture, pass facile judgement on this kind of literature. *The Manchester Guardian* (20 November 1925) finds the stories difficult to follow: 'It is difficult for the average Westerner to appreciate much of it, he dips into something which he cannot fathom.' For *The Irish Times* (8 January 1925) these 'peculiar', 'novel' stories, if typical, 'we have to conclude the chasm between the East and the West widens every day of what the world is pleased to call progress.'

When any credit was given to the work the language was found discreet and circumspect and it was weighed in a familiar comparative mode. The stories ('Giribala' being 'masterly') display 'economy of words,' 'sense of spiritual values in the life of India,' and occasionally 'successful use of symbolism.' On the last point *The Times Literary Supplement* (14 January 1926) gave its verdict: [Tagore is] 'half-way between Coleridge and Mr. T. S. Eliot.'

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1926 turned out to be an eventful year for Tagore and the British Press. Rabindranath's multifarious activities at that time came to be noticed by the media and he was written about extensively. In June Tagore arrived in Italy and was warmly welcomed by Mussolini. Civic receptions were held in his honour and the Duce himself was present at Tagore's lectures on 'The Meaning of Art.' His play, *Chitra*, rendered in Italian, was performed on the stage. For a time, it seemed that the fascist dictator's stage management of Tagore which would hopefully boost the rapidly deteriorating international image of the regime would succeed. The Italian Press put about distorted versions of Tagore's views which he had no way of putting to right. It was only when Tagore left Italy and came to Switzerland that he gathered from Romain Rolland how the Italian

propaganda machine had made use of him to suit their purpose. Later in Zurich he met Signora Salvadori who gave him a first-hand account of fascist atrocities witnessed by herself and corroborated by Modigliani in Vienna.

All this time the British Press was keeping a close watch on Tagore. *The Times* (2 June 1926) reported the poet's arrival in Rome where he was received by Signor Mussolini. On 11 June 1926, *The Daily News* informed its readers that Tagore was in Italy: 'He has changed his opinion regarding Fascism and its leader, though he argues that no good would result from the extension to other countries of methods which have been suitable in Italy.' An article by Aldo Sorani, based on his talk with Tagore while he was in Florence, was published in *The Observer* (27 June 1926). The article steered clear of the Mussolini-Tagore encounter.

On 29 July 1926, *The Manchester Guardian* published Tagore's reply to his critics who had alleged that the poet was an admirer of the idea and method of Fascism. In truth, Tagore wrote, 'I was not competent to say anything about Fascism as, not having studied the subject.' [Indeed] 'I have realised that in Italy today it is impossible for a traveller to gather the information necessary for an unbiased estimate of the movement.' About Mussolini: 'My admiration for the personality of Mussolini which I have had occasion to express was that of an artist.'

The matter did not end there. On 5 August 1926, the famous letter by Tagore to C. E. Andrews was published in the same paper. The next day its London correspondent's report of a meeting with the poet was printed. Among other things the to Andrews' letter and the subject of his Italian experience formed part of the discussion.

The letter to Andrews was long, frank and honest. Tagore did have misgivings created by reports reaching India about the character of the Fascist movement: 'I wanted to keep my mind neutral when I came to Italy.' In Italy the language barrier, and over-eagerness of reporters who had their own agenda created the impression with the public that Rabindranath was in sympathy with Fascism. Not only the biased Press, but also a section of the intellectual society, tried to convince Tagore of the practical necessity of the creed given the volatile nature of the Italian society. Even if it is conceded that a sovereign state is at liberty to choose its method of government, 'Tagore who had always been against nationalism, violence and aggression could not possibly support a system that 'ruthlessly suppresses freedom of expression, enforces observances that are against individual conscience.'

The letter touched on other subjects like Italy's and the West's deviation from the true path of Christianity, the role of the State and the place of the individual in it. The letter concluded with the hope that he was able to clear up the misunderstanding that his visit to Italy had created. The readers were urged that they must understand that his ideals could not be in harmony with the philosophy of Fascism.

The debate continued for a while. Responding to Tagore's letter *The Manchester Guardian* (7 August 1926) pointed out that he [Tagore] was for a long time opposed to nationalism and its handmaiden, a strong illiberal state. Tagore, while rightfully accepting the rich cultural heritage of Europe, and especially Italy's contribution to it, firmly opposed Fascism, and [thus] 'he does not foresee a long life for this experiment.' *The Inquirer* (14 August 1926) discussed *The Manchester Guardian* article and the interview of Tagore by

Prof. Salvadori, and was pleased to report the poet's fundamental opposition to Fascism. The Tagore-Mussolini meeting also formed the topic for the columnists writing for *The Daily Express* (21 August 1926) and a few other papers.

On 25 August 1926 *The Manchester Guardian* published a long letter by Carlo Formichi, who had arranged both visits of Tagore to Italy, and accompanied and guided him during his stay in the country. He thought that Tagore's own account published in the Press was not correctly given. 'There are perhaps some points on which my memory of the facts may help Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to reconstruct the story of his relation with Italy; that he needs my assistance for this purpose may be gathered from a letter which he wrote to Mr. Andrews ...' Prof. Formichi opined that from the beginning Tagore was determined that he would not make any statement on Italian politics ('politics always lead to controversy'). He was interested only in the cultural exchanges between the two countries. His two meetings with Signor Mussolini was most cordial, and they talked mostly 'on the cultural relations to be established between Italy and India and the lectures which the poet was to deliver in Rome.' Tagore was greatly impressed by the personality of Mussolini, and expressed his doubt that he could be 'the cruel tyrant whom so many are pleased to depict.' Italy was safe in his hands and would progress to great future under his leadership. It was only when Tagore had left the country that he wrote to Prof. Formichi saying that 'numerous facts had been brought to his notice about the method of Fascism which challenged the judgement of humanity and prevented him from remaining silently neutral.'

Writing editorially on the subject on the same day *The Manchester Guardian* was pleased that the misunderstanding had now been resolved, and was generous in its praise that only men of such tolerance and mutual respect could undertake such a 'clearing-up to process' so easily and perfectly. According to the paper there were two issues to face up: Mussolini the man and the nature of Fascism as applied in Italy. The leader writer agreed with Tagore that 'none of us can pretend today to pass judgement on that powerful and singular personality.' However, about Fascism there cannot be any disagreement that its general character is completely in discord with all that European civilization stands for.

*The Manchester Guardian* (15 September 1926) returned to the issue once again and published a report by its Rome correspondent. In Italy, the correspondent wrote, 'Tagore's famous letter to C.F. Andrews was not published, neither was there publication of Tagore's own words about Mussolini or Fascism. Indeed, the reading public was fed with the most viruluous criticism of anyone who dared to question the leader or the government. Tagore, the Italian Press declared, was 'dishonest who through his idiocy reneged on Italy's traditional and lordly hospitality' and 'began to 'spit poison' against the country as soon as he crossed the borders.

After Italy Rabindranath visited Switzerland and Austria and arrived in Britain in July 1926. This time, unlike his tours of 1920-21, Tagore was more warmly received, and the press coverage of him was extensive. This time, interestingly, there appeared much lighter, often affectionate writing, on the man Rabindranath. *Glasgow Daily Record* (7 August 1926) reported his (Tagore's) dislike of London—'a stifling cave,' his proposed visit to Cornwall, his sitting for an Epstein statue, and the possibility of staging a play of his by Miss Thorndike.

Tagore's condemnation of the 'over-sensationalism of modern film' was reported by *The Observer* (8 August 1926). *The Daily Courier* (9 August 1926) published a picture of him with Epstein describing him as 'the great Hindu poet mystic.' A number of other papers also published his picture. *The Inquirer* (14 August 1926) wrote in jest: 'We wonder, by the way, what Epstein, to whom Tagore is sitting will make of that calm, beautiful countenance?' The physical appearance and personality of Rabindranath have been an enduring interest for the press. The admiring gaze continued this time, when he was sixty-five years old. *The Westminster Gazette* (21 August 1926) saw in him 'a flowing fine hair, moustache and beard, and flowing creamy draperies, a beautiful figure—serenity and poise incarnate,' H. A. Brailsford (*The New Leader*, 27 August 1926) spoke of 'this astonishingly beautiful figure.' *The Daily Graphic* (5 August 1926) wrote of 'An Indian who conquered Europe.' Commenting on this 'amazing vogue of Rabindranath Tagore,' the paper declared:

The reappearance of Tagore in London is always an event. How should it not be? He is an extraordinary person, and as a phenomenon (there is no other word), he stands entirely alone in our modern world.

*The Evening Standard* (5 August 1926) alone sounded a different note. Referring to Tagore's visit to London the Paper suggested that this would hardly cause so much excitement as his visit before the War. Then there was too much hype about this man who was even compared with the great poet Shelley. Tagore really is a Bengali poet who has been almost entirely moulded by European experience.

Why did Tagore suddenly become popular in Britain? It is possible that the country had become used to his criticism of the West and had grown up to ignore the unpleasant remarks of this innocent man. While in London Tagore gave a number of interviews to the Press. His handling of the Italian episode with courage and honesty was appreciated as was his kind words about the West. 'He can still look hopefully upon Europe,' - *The Westminster Gazette's* (21 August 1926) reporter who interviewed him wrote enthusiastically.

1926 was also the year when Edward Thompson's revised biography—*Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist* - was published. Thompson argued and a sympathetic Press concurred that through indifferent and inadequate translation of a narrow range of his work Tagore had lost his popularity in the English-speaking world. The biographer made an attempt to change the world image and understanding of Tagore. The West had known only one aspect, a tiny one, of this man's work. The work that had been translated projected a man 'soft' and 'wistful', and 'full of charms.' But the real Tagore was 'brave', his 'spirit was brave and independent.' Thompson, in effect, wanted to erase the image of a poet-seer that the Orientalists had created and to present a writer of a wide range of subjects, of genre and style. He wanted to project a 'fully rounded, robust and incomparably greater and moving Tagore.'<sup>(10)</sup>

But in reality interest in Tagore had touched a low web, in spite of the sudden warming up of the Press in 1926. Thompson had difficulty in finding a publisher for his book. The Clarendon Press declined, saying 'Tag is entirely past his tag over here, that he would sell 100 copies.' In modern days supermarket speak Tagore has passed his shelf life and therefore his sale by date.<sup>(11)</sup>

From now on Rabindranath was not much reported by the British press. *The Manchester*

*Guardian* (14 September 1927) published a letter from Tagore protesting against a favourable review in *The New Statesman* of *Mother India* by Katherine Mayo, an American travel writer. The book's reference to Tagore's conviction that 'marriage should be consummated before puberty' was a hideous lie, deliberately untruthful and irresponsible, Tagore wrote in his letter.

In *The Times* of 29 November 1928 was published an item commenting favourably on Tagore's critique of the nationalist cult in India. The paper reported that according to Tagore the real problem in India was not political but social: 'Political freedom will not give us freedom when our mind is not free.'

In 1929 Tagore went to Canada to represent British India at the National Conference on Education, *The Times* reported in its issue of 23 March. On his way to the USA he was stopped at San Francisco where officials asked him if he could read or write English. An offended Tagore refused to land. Reporting the incident, *The Evening News* (24 April 1929) dismissed the matter suggesting that Tagore was 'destitute of humour.'

In 1930 a busy and restless Rabindranath went on a lecture tour of Europe, USA and Canada. His paintings were exhibited in Paris, Birmingham, London and Berlin. His speeches were increasingly critical of British rule of India, the evil of nationalism and the material civilization of the West. He met eminent persons like Einstein and Bernard Shaw, yet the big metropolitan newspapers, and other powerful opinion makers did not pay much attention, and wrote hardly on Tagore. In *The Times* (being a paper of record) his movements and activities were reported but not much discussed. The paper routinely chronicled his travels and speeches. For example, on 16 May 1932, it reproduced (at the request of the Society of Friends) Tagore's appeal for a fresh start in Indo-British relations based on 'harmony and understanding, intimate fellowship and truth.' The appeal made by sixty prominent Indians, headed by Rabindranath Tagore, for the release of political prisoners was published in its issue of 10 June 1933. On 7 February 1934, *The Times'* Correspondent in Calcutta informed its readers of Tagore's displeasure ('Mr. Gandhi Rebuked') of Gandhi's theory of Divine Vengeance on the people of Bihar that manifested itself in the terrible earthquake in that part of India. Reporting the correspondence between Professor Gilbert Murray and Dr. Rabindranath Tagore in its issue of 16 February 1934, the paper almost casually scripted that in his reply 'Dr. Tagore was uninspiring in repetition of his well-known condemnation of Western exploitation of the East.'

It appears that the national Press had lost interest in Tagore. The provincial papers like *The Manchester Guardian*, literary journals like *The Spectator* and liberal Christian organs like *The Friend* continued to write on his activities. His views on religion, philosophy, politics, education and Indo-British relations were sympathetically appraised by writers in these periodicals.

*The Times* reported but did not discuss Tagore's Hibbert lectures which he gave in May 1930. In 1931, when commenting on Gertrude Emerson's book, *Voiceless India*, its reviewers mentioned Tagore's introduction to the book which was 'enthusiastic' and 'angry.' The book itself, according to one reviewer, contained much superfluous information and suffered from being one-sided and silent on the 'degrading social customs of Indians.'

A provincial daily, *Glasgow Daily Record and Mail*, which previously had shown no interest in Rabindranath Tagore, suddenly came out with an item in its 'This Morning Gossip' column (8 January 1931) inviting its readers to share its glee at the poet's dressing down by the American press baron, W. R. Hearst, who was usually critical of the British Empire. Rebuking Tagore for his 'colossal nerve,' Hearst warned him not to forget that, 'his own India is kept from going to complete smash only by power and justice of Britain.' One wonders why a Glasgow paper, which so far had made no attempt to inform its readers about Rabindranath, his literary, social and educational work, should suddenly find immensely newsworthy a comment made by someone from the other side of the ocean about the man. Was there a great dearth of news on that day, or, were it that only amusing and derogatory comment about the poet was regarded as worth printing, however casual and irrelevant they might be?

As a matter of fact this man with 'colossal nerve' was then in Britain and was, in lectures, condemning nationalism both of the Eastern and the Western brands, and was making a passionate plea for international cooperation, mutual understanding and open relationship of people all over the world. Refreshingly, *The Spectator* in its issue of 7 June 1930 published an article by Tagore on 'the fundamental issue of the Indian problem, and let its readers hear of the Indian case from Indians themselves.' The paper did not agree with Tagore's arguments, yet opened its column inviting comments by writers qualified to speak for moderate Indian opinion. The readers' response was published in its subsequent issues.

Rabindranath visited the Soviet Union in late 1930. Only one aspect of the tour was taken up by *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*. Other papers did not find anything to report on the subject. It was Tagore's alleged interview with the reporter of *Izvestia*. *The Times*' (29 September 1930) headline to the story (running only fourteen lines) was cryptic: 'The Soviet Execution. Disapproval within Russia.' The *Izvestia* story [is] 'alleged to have been written by Sir Rabindranath Tagore.'... 'he [Tagore] dreams that some day his country may be admitted to the blessings and emancipation of spirit such as the people of USSR enjoy.'

In a fuller account *The Manchester Guardian* (14 October 1930) under the caption *An Appreciation and a Warning*, highlighted Tagore's admiration of Russia 'in spreading education among the peasant masses,' and its realization that it was through universal education that all social evils can be eradicated and not by 'police batons and military browbeating.' In the same interview the poet also expressed his uneasiness about Soviet leaders' 'class hatred and revengefulness' against their opponents. He pleaded for openness, tolerance and free circulation of intellectual exchange and moral persuasion.

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Tagore's paintings, a medium to which he came late in his life and excelled quickly, were not given much attention by the British press. A collection of his works was exhibited in Birmingham and London in 1930. The opening of the Exhibition was reported in *The Times* on 5 June 1930 without any review or comments by its arts correspondent. For *The Friend* (13 June 1930) his paintings were closely compatible to the drawings of William

Blake. Their expression of the mystical and the hymnal, their quality of peace and tranquility were remarkable and memorable: 'They are the pinning down to paper not of feeling, or evolution, but of pure essential harmony.' It was *The Birmingham Mail* (4 June 1930) which published a careful, detailed and expert review of Tagore's achievement in a new medium. The critic pointed out the nature of evolution which marked his venture in this field. The early paintings bore the mark of 'automatic submission to a rhythmical impulse' 'devoid of material representation.' Later works were marked by 'suggestion of human figures in movement.' Yet the link between the two is organic: 'rhythm is the commanding feature.' The paintings done in 1929 progressed with a 'deliberate aberration from natural forms, approaching in some instances the deliberately grotesque.' The critic concluded enthusiastically: 'This exhibition is a marvellous example of the sense of balance, even into the most fortuitous of its forms.'

The 1938 exhibition, however, was more closely scrutinized by the press. Report, but without any review, of the show in the Calmann Gallery, London was published in *The Times* (10 December 1938). A number of other papers were more interested. *The Daily Mail* (14 December 1938) reviewer, Pierre Jeanneret, saw in these 'doodles' vast meaning because of 'his [Tagore's] inborn feeling of beauty and the expanse of mind.' These works reminded *The Manchester Guardian* (15 December 1938) of the art work of a Mexican pot, of Celtic illumination and of a soft and atmospheric water colour by Turner. *The Observer* (18 December 1938) writer found in the work a 'great zest for movement, [and] unusual use of lighting.' *The Sunday Times* (18 December 1938) wrote guardedly: '...whether any given drawing has "come off" or not from the point of design is debatable, yet there is a loveable, playful flavour in them all.' Exceptionally, *The Great Britain and East* (15 December 1938) saw in Tagore paintings oriental inspiration coming from Hindu mythology: 'His portrait of an Indian girl is reticent in its mysticism. He interprets the soul of his people and is content to allow the physical aspects of their existence escape as if by accident from the cloud of colour splashed on the canvas. Only the East could have produced this art' Here, refreshingly there is no sign of excess anxiety to find analogous texts, be that from distant Mexico or native Turner. Joseph Southall who wrote the Introduction to the Catalogue of the Birmingham Exhibition also wanted to situate Tagore paintings within an Indian tradition of 'powerful imagination seeing things in line and colour as the best oriental sees them, with the sense of rhythm and pattern found in Persian and Indian textile.'

In a long, detailed and knowledgeable article, *A land made for poetry/New India's hope and fears*, the anonymous author writing for *The Times Literary Supplement* (1 February 1936) suggested that 'there is fortunately, no need to assess his [Tagore's] achievements yet.' Rabindranath, the writer continued, who 'span the generations between the beginning of modern Indian literature and what that literature is doing to-day, is to be praised for his genius for following the life of his own time with more quick and various and catholic interest, than any other poet.' His metrical ease and mastery are described as unique. It appears that the reviewer knew the Bengali language and its literature well. He refers to Tagore's recent Bengali works like *Lipika*, *Muktadhara* and *Bithika* (The writer, however, does not mention that these new writings remain untranslated into English. Neither does he

make any case for their translation). 'The West's inscription of him as a 'mystic' is readily rejected. 'His senses are too alert, too troubled with every movement of the world outside India to be so dismissed.' Yet such variegated interests and 'a curiosity which time could not deaden' perhaps got the better of him when he went to Russia ('too pervadingly enthusiastic'), the reviewer commented.

The article, though long and erudite, reflecting the writer's extensive knowledge of India and its literary products, is burdened with much essentialist and canonical thinking about the Orient. Thus the old Indian literature has been neither romantic nor classical, but in the main of one sort only, devotional and religious. The habit of comparing Tagore with European poets was not dispensed with. In this article he was found in the excellent company of Dryden and Robert Bridges.

In 1940 the Oxford University honoured Tagore by conferring on him an honorary degree of D.Litt. *The Times* reported the news in its issue of 28 February 1940. Before that, on 23 February 1940 the paper printed an article, 'The Poet of India Rabindranath Tagore's genius' by Edward Thompson. Following the well-worn convention Thompson highlighted the Tagore family's Western connections to Dwarkanath (the poet's grandfather), to 'a brother (of Rabindranath) who was the first Indian to enter the ICS.' Rabindranath himself read Shakespeare in London University, Thompson informed his readers.

Rabindranath Tagore died on 7 August 1941. Next day *The Daily Herald*, *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, *The News Chronicle* and *The Times* published the news of the 'passing away of the famous poet.' In brief obituary notices his sudden rise to fame in the West following W. B. Yeats' introduction of him to the English literary world and the award of the Nobel Prize was highlighted, as was his role as a 'religious leader of surprising eloquence.' He was praised for his outstanding personality and remarkable presence. Peterborough of *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* (8 August 1941) reminded readers of Tagore's renouncement of Knighthood after the 'Amritsar incident'—an act which he was urged to reconsider. For *The News Chronicle* (8 August 1941) this was an act of 'tact'. The same columnist of *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* also referred to Tagore's experiment with paintings which he began late in his life. Such late start and uniquely experimental brush reminded Peterborough of Churchill who began to draw late in his life. A similarity between Tagore and the Spanish painter Zuloaga pleasantly surprised Peterborough. Thus was Rabindranath safely coopted into the convention of European modern art.

That he was anti-imperialist, anti-nationalist and was against the British rule of India did not find any space in this writing.

## Conclusion

How serious and important are these writings in the British Press? After all we know of the pressure under which the dailies and weeklies conduct their business. There is pressure of time, the deadline, the pressure of fad and fashion, what will sell the paper, how will the competitors react, the constraints of space, style and policy. The writings are for today or this week, to be consigned to the bin the next day or week.

Yet there is no doubt that the Press is important and influential. It is the accumu-

lation of perceptions over time that their day to day columns convey, establish and get etched in the public mind and remain embedded in historical consciousness. Media, to a great extent, reflect and mould public policy, public understanding and public attitude. The press cuttings are historical documents of a particular time and milieu.

How do the writers for the Press acquire their knowledge of the subject of their report and comment? They go through schools and universities which embody and distribute knowledge. Such knowledge is derivative, authoritarian and based on a number of unquestioned assumptions. The student-turned-journalist consciously or unconsciously reproduces such knowledge and perception.

In the early years of the twentieth century knowledge about the East was derived from a discourse known as Orientalism. The British imperialism that ruled India drew its intellectual and moral strength from Orientalism. The all-powerful West held a world-view that was Eurocentric, hegemonic and nationalistic. The colonial political economy that was India at the time encouraged the growth of a cluster of connections which made India weak and inferior, and British a powerful and privileged modern rational state. The relationship, clearly, was one of inequality.

In the civilizational scale derived by the West India was assigned an inferior status. From this followed the justification of colonial rule which was based on a theory of progress that hierarchized races, cultures and civilizations. In the binary division of 'Self' and the 'Other' the West (Self) was rational, enlightened with scientific and rational attributes, whereas the non-West (Other) was irrational, passive, ahistorical.

In 1912, when our story of Rabindranath and the British Press begins, India had completed one hundred and fifty-five years of colonial rule. Her weakness, political and economic, was attributed not to her colonial dependency, but to structural and endemic backwardness. This, and the need for a long period of tutelage, help and guidance by Britain was accepted as an ordained fact by all shades of opinion in the metropolis.

The East was an object for inspection, viewing and gazing by the West. Every aspect of the East had to be judged, assessed and examined against Western canons, and those regarded as not meeting this 'objective' test should be rejected, discarded and denied authenticity. In this process of scrutinization, claimed to be objective knowledge, 'the observer was partitioned off from the observed, the subject from the object of knowledge, the enlightened agent from the passive ahistorical laity, the rational from non-rational.'<sup>12)</sup> Strict rules and procedures were laid down for reading and reviewing Eastern cultural and intellectual products. The West's encounter with Rabindranath Tagore faithfully followed the 'Oriental' rules of reading and appraisal. This reading denied India her cultural selfhood. The print media reading of Rabindranath that constructed an imaginary man from the East, was a sanitized voice purged of the presence of a recurring sense of colonial oppression, political dissent and moral defiance. Here was a controlled, selected, organized and redistributed reading of Tagore. Much Selection, prohibition and sanction constrained this encounter with a man who was more than a product of Macaulay's formidic prescription, an acceptable and harmless blending of East and the West, a gift of British presence in India. Press reporting on Rabindranath carried this ideology. Their writing was burdened with their prejudices; it followed the accepted

East-West binary division valorising the latter. The East was an exotic land. Rabindranath came from this land, but for the grace of Western civilizational influence, could be coopted in the tradition of European literature and culture. What was needed was a prescribed reading of him following appropriate Western aesthetic convention and standard.

In this reading there was a complete negation of Eastern literary tradition. Hardly any attempt was made to situate and contextualize Rabindranath in his own history and tradition. The comparative frame—how does he compare with Western literary figures—became an obsession, thus effecting a barrier which stifled communication and understanding. One was expected to read him in a certain way which often led to distortion of meaning and utterance. In this comparative mode of reading one continuously searched for similarity, commonness and identity. In the process one missed something. Outside the so-called familiarity, the area that was different, that was unique and separate is either ignored or explained away as exotic, peculiar or inferior.

Media in Britain was not interested in an 'open' reading of Tagore. Their reading was burdened inexorably by transference and counter-transference. The Press did not report some 'reality' out there. Their text was contextual.

This Introduction, I hope, has articulated an extremely important set of issues and has provided a framework for addressing them.

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*The British Press: a profile*

A few words on the nature of business, political inclination and character of some of the British newspapers and journals during the period in discussion will be relevant in the present context. Table I shows the number of dailies and weeklies published in Britain in years 1912 and 1941.\*

**Table I**

	1912	1941
Morning dailies (National)	22	18
Evening dailies (London)	8	4
Dailies and weeklies (published from London including Sunday papers)	299	200
Dailies and weeklies (from London suburb)	130	117
Total	459	339
The total number of weeklies and journals published from the countries were:		
England and Wales	1509	1187
Scotland	247	204
Ireland	191	
Northern Ireland	--	52
Total	1947	1443

*The Times Literary Supplement*, which deals with art and literature issues, and *The Times Educational Supplement* which is mainly concerned with issues of educational importance. The Sunday supplement of the same paper is *The Sunday Times*. Other papers of quality and standard during that period, some of which are still appearing today, were *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Chronicle*, *The Daily News and Leader* and *The Standard*.

Every newspaper more or less supports policies of its favourite political parties. Even a paper which claims independence in views, often shows some inclination towards a particular political group. During 1912 the British Parliament was dominated by three major political parties --Conservative, Liberal and Unionist. The Conservative and the Unionist papers had limited interest in colonial arts. On colonial issues, the bulk of the reportage in these papers dealt with imperial administration and commerce. The political opinions too, from a colonial point of view, were often unilateral and biased. On the other hand, the liberal papers, to a certain extent, were sympathetic towards colonial causes, and reports of colonial art and literature found their way into columns of these papers. Readers of this volume will be interested to see whether the political orientation has any influence in assessing Tagore's personality and literary merits in these newspapers. Some of the newspapers (which are frequently referred in this compilation) and their political colours, officially recognized in 1913, are given in Table II.\*\*

From the table it is evident that there was a drop of only 5 per cent in the total number of papers and journals over the period of twenty-nine years, which may be due to loss of popularity of some papers, but also due to evergrowing popularity of the new audio media of that time wireless.

The oldest newspaper in Britain (now ceased printing) *The Morning Post* first came out in 1772. The second oldest is *The Times*, published in 1788. This paper, overriding the stormy path of two centuries, is still surviving with its glory and tradition. *The Times* is still the paper of respectability and opinion. Its weekly supplements include

\*Cited from *The Newspaper Press Directory and Advertisers' Guide*, C Mitchell & Co Ltd., London 1913 and 1941.

\*\*Cited from *The Newspaper Press Directory and Advertisers' Guide*, C Mitchell & Co., Ltd London, 1913 and 1941.

The tabloid press, as it is now, was equally strong and powerful in the past. The Papers like *The Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Express* are still being printed with full authority. Yet the nature of the tabloids has changed a great deal. Saucy items of sex, society

**Table II**

The Daily Chronicle	Liberal
The Daily Express	Unionist
The Daily Mail	Unionist
The Daily Mirror	Unionist
The Daily News	Liberal/progressive
The Observer	Unionist
The Daily Telegraph	Unionist
The Morning Post	Conservative
The Standard	Conservative
The Times	Liberal
The Evening News	Conservative
The Evening Standard and St James's Gazette	Conservative
The Globe	Conservative
The Westminster Gazette	Liberal

gossip and scandalmongering were always the preoccupation of these papers, as it is now, although serious discussions on various social and political issues and matters of topical interest also found their way into those papers. In one such tabloid we come across a review of *The Crescent Moon* by the poet Walter de la Mare.

Among the weekly journals *The Athenaeum*, *The Nation*, *The Spectator*, *The Outlook*, *The Inquirer*, *Public Opinion* were and some of them still are considered journals of quality where Tagore had been reported on a number of occasions. Editors of some of these papers - John Massingham of *The Nation*, Evelyn

Wrench of *The Spectator* and C. P. Scott of *The Manchester Guardian* were close friends of Tagore. 'Those noble men of England who never judge their own country with others, their own race with others, in a false measure of selfishness; who never protect an evil in any false pretension, *The Nation* is engaged in publicising their messages,'—he once wrote in one of his travelogues.\*

Among the Sunday papers *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times* are worth mentioning. The popular Missionary papers of that time were *Baptist Times and Freeman* and *The Christian Commonwealth*. *The Friend* was the spokesperson of the Quakers. *The Stage* and *The Era* were two leading journals of theatre and arts at that time.

*The Manchester Guardian* was one of the standard dailies published from outside London which is now published as *The Guardian*. Similar Scottish papers—*Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald* were important. *The Irish Times* was the distinguished paper from the undivided Ireland.

The leading satirical and comical journal of the country—*Punch*—was regarded as a national institution for its special tradition and character. Its pages contained the best products of literary and pictorial humorists of the day. For its political and social cartoons the politicians and statesmen often kept a safe distance from this paper. An well circulated illustrated weekly was *The Graphics*.

It is interesting to note that Tagore had been reported in papers and journals of diverse interests and businesses such as in the women's fashion magazine—*The Ladies' Field*, in military and naval services *The Broad Arrow*, in the journal of small advertisements for goods for sale—*The Bazaar, Exchange and Mart*, in a metaphysical and spiritualist paper—*Psychic News*, even in *The Municipal Journal of Public Works Engineer*. All those papers, journals and magazines at one time or other reported news on Tagore. There is hardly any evidence in our recent time that a poet of one country has been reported so exhaustively and exuberantly in the Press of another country as Rabindranath Tagore was reported in the British print media.

\*Translated from *Pather Sanchaya* by Rabindranath Tagore, *Rabindrarachanabali*, vol.26, pp.515, Visva-Bharati, Calcutta 1977.

***Period 1912-1915***

**Gitanjali  
Nobel Prize  
Knighthood**



# Poetry.

## THE COUNTRY OF "FOUND-EVERYTHING."

In the country of "Found Everything,"  
 Palaces rise not high  
 The gates are open wide,  
 No sentinels standing by.  
 In stables are no horses,  
 No beautiful elephants show,  
 No lamps of scented oil  
 Burn while soft winds blow!  
 The women—ah! the women—  
 They wear no jewels on hair,  
 The golden turrets in temples  
 Are nowhere visible there.

On sides of lovely walks,  
 The sward lies deep and green,  
 The limpid stream hard by  
 Displays its crystal sheen  
 A hut, with a hedge round it;  
 There creepers twine and coil,  
 And all day long the bees  
 In flowers buzz and toil  
 In the morning the passers-by  
 Go to their work and sing,  
 In evening they come unpaid,  
 In the land of "Found-Everything"

In the courtyard of her hut  
 Sits the girl at hot noon tide  
 She hums a tune as she spins,  
 The shades fall at her side  
 In fields the now paddy shoots  
 Wave in the breeze all day  
 An unknown scent or sound  
 Brings on a sudden dismay!  
 The deep heart of the sky  
 To the woodland's bosom doth chug,  
 And whoever goes goes singing  
 In the land of "Found Everything"

The merchants' boats pass by,  
 They sail on far away,  
 They touch not here for bargain,  
 They rest not here one day.  
 The soldiers march with victory,  
 Their banners stream in the sky,  
 Their monarch stops not here,  
 As his chariot rolls hard by.  
 Travellers from distant lands,  
 Whom here chance does bring,  
 They fail to see what's there,  
 In the land of "Found-Everything"

No rush and hurry in streets,  
 No din in marts, no noise.  
 Here build thy peaceful hut,  
 O, poet! take thy choice!  
 Lay down this weary load,  
 Wash thy dirt off here,  
 Set thy guitar in tune,  
 And see what treasure is near!  
 Spread out thy tired feet,  
 And rest when birds drop wing,  
 'Neath the sky lit up with stars  
 In the land of "Found-Everything."

[Translated from the Bengali of Rabindra Nath Tagore]

Fig. 1 The first poem of Tagore to appear in a British Periodical  
*The Nation* 15 June 1912 p406



1912

13 July, 1912

THE TIMES

p5c6(D)

## DINNER TO MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

### A BENGALI POET

On Wednesday last at the Trocadero Restaurant there was a large gathering in honour of Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore. Mr. W. B. YEATS presided, among those present were Messrs. J. W. Mackail, Herbert Trench, R. B. Cunningham Graham, H. W. Nevinson, H. G. Wells, Cecil Sharp, J. D. Anderson, E. B. Havell, T. W. Arnold, R. Vaughan Williams and T. W. Rolleston.

Mr Yeats, in proposing the toast of "Our Guest", said that the great event in the life of an artist was to find a work of genius which he did not know existed. "To take part in honouring Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore is one of the great events of my artistic life. I have been carrying about with me a book of translations into English prose of 100 of his Bengali lyrics, written within the last ten years. I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics. Even as I read them in this literal prose translation they are exquisite in style as in thought. The style was familiar in Europe several hundred years ago. Mr Rabindra Nath Tagore is also a great musician; he sets his poems to music, then he teaches poem and music to someone, and so together they go from mouth to mouth, sung by his people, very much as poetry was sung in Europe three or four centuries ago. In all his poems there is one single theme; the love of God. When I tried to find anything Western which I might compare with the work of Mr Tagore I thought of 'The Imitation of Christ' by Thomas A Kempis. It is like, yet between the work of the two men there is a whole world of difference. Thomas A Kempis was obsessed by the thought of sin; he wrote of it in terrible imagery. Mr. Tagore has a little thought of sin as a child playing with a top. In Thomas A Kempis there is no

place for the love of visible nature, into his great austere nature such a love did not enter. But Mr Tagore loves nature, his poems are full of the most beautiful touches showing his keen observation and deep love.

Mr YEATS then read Mr. Tagore's own English prose translation of three lyrics, two of which were as follows

"I was not aware of the moment when I first crossed the threshold of this life. What was the power that opened me out upon this vast mystery like a bird in the forest in midnight? When in the morning I looked upon the light I felt in a moment that I was no stranger in this world, that the inscrutable without name and form has taken me in its arms in the form of my own mother. Even so, in death the same unknown will appear as ever known to me. And because I love this life, I know I will love death as well. The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away to find its consolation in the left one in the very next moment."

"In the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers."

"To-day the morning has closed its eye, heedless of the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and over the ever wakeful blue sky a thick veil has been drawn."

"The woodlands have hushed their songs and doors are all shut at every house. Thou art the solitary wayfarer in this deserted street. Oh, my only friend, my best beloved, the gates are open in my house - do not pass by like a dream."

Mr RABINDRA NATH TAGORE, on rising to reply, was received with the warmest enthusiasm. "I have not the power adequately to express my gratitude for the great honour you have done me. This is one of the proudest moments of my life. I have a speaking acquaintance with your glorious language; yet I can but feel in my own. My Bengali has been a jealous mistress, claiming all my homage and resenting rivals. Still, I have put up with her exactions with cheerful submission; I could do no other. I cannot do more than assure you that the unfailing kindness with which I have been greeted in England has moved me far more than I can tell. I have learned that, though our

tongues are different and our habits dissimilar, at the bottom our hearts are one. The monsoon clouds, generated on the banks of the Nile, fertilise the far distant shores of the Ganges, ideas may have to cross from East to Western shores to find a welcome in men's hearts and fulfil their promise. East is East and West is West. God forbid that it should be otherwise. But the twain must meet in amity, peace, and understanding, then meeting will be all the more fruitful because of their differences; it must lead both to holy wedlock before the common altar of humanity."

The toast of "India" was proposed by PROFESSOR T. W. ARNOLD and seconded by Mr. W. ROTHENSTEIN.

SIR KRISHNA GUPTA in the course of his reply, said: "It has been a great joy to me to be present here honouring my friend Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore. I have known him since he was a boy, I have followed his career with deep interest. He is the recognised poet and essayist of Bengal, his books and papers are read everywhere. But his work is not limited only to intellectual effort; he is doing much to introduce a better system of education. His school at Bhawalpur [sic] is most successful, and in Bengal he is widely appreciated as an educational reformer. The successful work he has done will produce important results."

16 July, 1912

**THE TIMES**

p7c3-4 D

### THE TRIUMPH OF ART OVER CIRCUMSTANCES

At dinner which was given last week in London to MR. RABINDRA NATH TAGORE, the Bengali poet, he is reported in returning thanks, to have used these words: "I cannot do more than assure you that the unfailing kindness with which I have been greeted in England has moved me more than I can tell. I have learned that, though our tongues are different and our habits dissimilar, at the bottom our hearts are one." We may be sure that this was not merely a formal compliment,

that the speaker meant what he said. For the dinner itself was not a formal compliment. It was given by English poets and other writers to an Indian poet, whose poems, translated by himself into English, had confirmed by their moving power the truth of that saying of his, that, in spite of all difference of language and habits, at the bottom the hearts of men are one. This is a fact constantly insisted upon by those who have the greatest knowledge of alien races. It is a fact which they learn slowly and by long experience; but it is one which art can teach in a flash to those who know its secrets and lay their minds open to its influence. They are aware that art is a means of communication, the only means which can overcome all obstacles of circumstance, all differences of time and place; because it deals with those feelings which are common to all men and has the power of carrying them from one mind to another. This has been said for ages, but it has only been realised in modern times. Whatever our own artistic defects may be, we have at least freed ourselves from the aesthetic exclusiveness of the eighteenth century. We no longer believe that there is one civilised art inherited from the Greeks and alone worth the serious attention of civilized men. We are aware that arts have flourished in nearly all ages and among nearly all peoples, and that, whenever they are expressive, they have the same kind of excellence and the same value to the mind of man.

This change of view is not merely a more enlightened or tolerant kind of connoisseurship. Any one who collects Chinamen because they are queer or pretty might as well be collecting postage stamps. The value to us of the art of a race far removed from us in time or space consists in the fact that the art is a means of expression, that by means of it the artist speaks to us far more intimately than men usually talk to us in our own language and face to face, and that, hearing him speak thus intimately, we become aware that he is a man like ourselves and divided from us only by superficial differences. Circumstances, in real life, are always playing their tricks and imposing their illusions upon us. When they are most tyrannous they estrange us even from those who are most familiar to us. To men in extremes of fear or hunger other men are merely hostile animals; and differences of language,

custom, and appearance are circumstances more permanent in their estranging effect. Because of them it is difficult for the European to realise that the inner human likeness is far more essential than any outward dissimilarity. But art frees the spirit which circumstance enslaves, for the artist creates a world of the spirit, which is always the same world because the spirit is always the same. No good art, of course, is empty of circumstance; but it has the power of making unfamiliar circumstance familiar. The Chinese artist paints China and makes it seem like home to those Europeans who see in him the artist, not merely the Chinaman. In literature the obstacles of language are more troublesome; but translation, practised by one who has overcome them himself, may overcome most of them for others. A good translation must rob a great poem of many beauties, but it will keep the essence for those readers who know how to find it; and Mr. TAGORE has won the admiration of English poets by his own translation of his works. To them he is not a Bengali but a brother poet, and they enjoy his works, not because they are different from their own or amusing for their local colour, but because, being poetry, they are of the same nature as all other poetry, Eastern or Western.

If we like exotic art merely for its strangeness, it is not art to us at all, and we may be sure that we do not understand it until it seems quite familiar to us. Indeed, it is only in periods of decadence or in the work of inferior artists that local and temporal characteristics become predominant. People believed that Greek art was peculiar, and because of its peculiarities superior to all other art, when they knew it mainly from Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman examples. In those examples it is peculiar because it has ceased to be completely expressive and triumphant over circumstance. But the greater Greek art has not this peculiarity, and it has a more essential likeness to great Chinese art than to the works of its own decline. There is a provincial grotesqueness in degenerate Oriental art, as in degenerate Gothic art; and there is a provincial pomposity and coldness in degenerate Greek art. Each of these arts is sharply distinct from the others through its own peculiar weakness; for in each case the weakness is the result of circumstance hindering the expression of the spirit

But the greatest art of East and West is neither grotesque nor pompous. It masters all peculiarities of time and place, and tells us that the spirit of man, in its freedom, has always and everywhere valued the same things and expressed those values in the same forms of beauty. The artist, like all men, may be enslaved by circumstance and may produce in his art, not the free world of the spirit, but the hampered and fettered world of ordinary life. He may speak to us only of passing trivialities and unrealities, of the fashions and conventions of his time. When he does so, his art loses its meaning as soon as those fashions and conventions are obsolete. It becomes a mere curiosity, like the costumes of the past, for it expresses values that are not permanent. But great art may be known by the fact that it expresses values which are permanent, and assures us that in all ages and countries the hearts of men are indeed one.

26 July, 1912

**THE TIMES**

p9c2(D)

### THE POEMS OF MR. TAGORE

A recitation of some of the poems of Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, who is now in London, will be given in the Royal Albert Hall Theatre on Tuesday evening at 8.30. A romantic comedy in one act by Mr. Tagore and Mr. George Calderon, entitled *The Maharani of Arakan*, will be produced.

31 July, 1912

**THE TIMES**

p5c6(D)

### THE INDIAN DRAMATIC SOCIETY A TAGORE EVENING

Last night at the Albert Hall Theatre the Indian Dramatic Society gave a little entertainment which deserved a larger audience than it had. It might be described as a Tagore evening, since to Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, "the poet and saint of Bengal", as

one of his admirers roundly described him, we owed most of the programme

In the absence of the Maharajah of Jhalawar, it fell to Mr. William Rothenstein to give a short address on the characteristics of Mr. Tagore's thought and work, his mysticism, the delight in the world about him which separates him from many Western mystics (but not, we should like to say, from all – from Traherne, for instance, or from Crashaw); his attitude to life and to death, the great lord for whom we keep all the riches of our thought and spirit. Then Miss Florence Farr read a few of Mr. Tagore's English translations of his poems, including one or two that we published in our report of the recent dinner in Mr. Tagore's honour and one of his poems about children. The hearing was a pleasure, and it certainly woke the desire to have these poems in the hand, to dream over and savour slowly.

The second part of the entertainment consisted of a one-act play, the *Maharam of Arakan*, founded by Mr. George Calderon, on a story by Mr. Tagore. It tells how the King of Arakan, in the guise of a peasant, wooed Amma, the daughter of Shah Sujah, whom his father had put to death. Roshenara, the elder sister, nurses plans of revenge, and Amma is ready to carry them out until she finds that her peasant-lover and the King are the same person. The little play gave an attractive picture of the fugitive Princess's life in the cottage of an old fisherman, and of her love for her supposed peasant, a wild wood man as he appears to her, shy, gentle, and simple. Miss Muriel Reddall acted very prettily as Amma, and Mr. Vernon Steel very gracefully as the King; while Miss Olga Ward as Roshenara, Mr. Leon M. Lion as the old Fisherman, and Mr. Ambrose Flower as a very splendid and pompous Mogul officer filled out the picture. We cannot tell who was responsible for the statement on the programme that "below the surface" of the comedy lay a political lesson on the relations of England and India. Whether Mr. Tagore's story were a political allegory or not, such references are better omitted from the programmes of artistic entertainments. Among the attractions not the least was the Indian music provided by five players and singers, headed by Professor Inayat Khan. The four stringed instruments, the two drums, and the voices became more and more interesting as the ear grew accustomed to the sound; and Mr. Inayat Khan, in

his suppleness of voice and a power of rapid speech that surpassed even that of the late George Grossmith.

7 November, 1912

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**  
p492(W)

### MR. TAGORE'S POEMS

**GITANJALI (Song Offerings). By RABINDRA NATH TAGORE.**

**A Collection of Prose Translations made by the Author from the original Bengali. With an Introduction by W. B. YEATS.**

**(Printed at the Chiswick Press for the India Society. 10s.6d.net).**

The chief cause of decadence in any art is impoverishment of subject-matter; and poetry is always liable to this impoverishment when it has not enough intellectual power to pass from its primitive stage of dealing with the particular to the task of dealing with the general. It must accomplish this transition, if it is to remain living art in a society that is largely concerned with ideas; for otherwise the poets, for the sake of their art, fall into an obsolete state of mind and fail to interest anyone except the connoisseur of that art. Poetry must conquer the province of ideas if it is not to be subdued by them into prose. It must learn to express the emotions stirred by ideas, as it has in the past expressed the emotions stirred by facts; and in doing so it must remain poetry with the old music, imagery, and unhesitating sense of values. That is the problem which troubles our poetry at present and seems to endanger its very existence; and it is no wonder that Mr. Yeats should hail with delight the work of an Indian poet who seems to solve it as easily as it was solved in Chinese painting of a thousand years ago.

Mr. Tagore has translated his poems into English prose, simple and often half-rhythmical, so that their sense is not obscured by an obvious inadequacy of language; and in reading them one feels, not that they are the curiosities of an alien mind, but that they are prophetic of the poetry that might be written in England if our poets could

attain to the same harmony of emotion and idea. That divorce of religion and philosophy which prevails among us is a sign of our failure in both. We keep our emotions for particular things and cannot carry them into our contemplation of the universe. That chills us and turns our speech to cold scientific jargon; and the jargon affects our very thought, so that from speaking of life as if it were a mechanical process we come to think of it so. But this Indian poet, without any obsolete timidity of thought, makes religion and philosophy one. He contemplates the universe as a primitive poet might contemplate a pair of lovers, and makes poetry out of it as naturally and simply. As we read his pieces we seem to be reading the Psalms of a David of our time who addresses a God realised by his own act of faith and conceived according to his own experience of life. "Our Master himself" he says, "has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all for ever." Yet this act of faith and this conception are not easy for him, any more than they were easy for George Herbert; and, like Herbert, he is aware of a usurping self in him which he hates:

I came out alone on my way to my tryst. But who is this that follows me in the silent dark? I move aside to avoid his presence but I escape him not.

He makes the dust rise from the earth with his swagger; he adds his loud voice to every word that I utter.

He is my own little self, my Lord, he knows no shame; but I am ashamed to come to thy door in his company.

Like Herbert, too, he rebels and sees that this rebellion was a lover's quarrel caused by excess of love, by the desire for a new reconciliation.

As the storm still seeks its end in peace when it strikes against peace with all its might, even thus my rebellion strikes against thy love and still its cry is - I want thee, only thee.

This is the language of religious poetry in all ages and countries when it is freed from mere jargon. But there is more of Eastern subtlety in his songs of illusion and that separation which the creator imposes upon himself when he creates:

Thou settest a barrier in thy own being and then

callest thy severed self in myriad notes. This thy self-separation has taken body in me.

The poignant song is echoed through all the sky in many-coloured tears and smiles, alarms and hopes, waves rise up and sink again, dreams break and form. In me is thy own defeat of self.

And again:

It is the pang of separation that spreads throughout the world and gives birth to shapes innumerable in the infinite sky.

It is this sorrow of separation that gazes in silence all night from star to star and becomes lyric among rustling leaves in rainy darkness of July.

It is this overspreading pain that deepens into loves and desires into sufferings and joys in human homes, and thus it is that ever melts and flows in songs through my poet's heart.

But this diversity, and the pain and strife that come of it, are justified by the belief, also common among poetic mystics, that God would be lonely and would not be able to exercise his highest function without them. "O thou Lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not?" To a poet of this kind the nearest and smallest things are connected with the furthest and greatest:

When I bring to you coloured toys, my child, I understand why there is such a play of colours on clouds, on water, and why flowers are painted in tints - when I give coloured toys to you, my child.

When I sing to make you dance I truly know why there is music in leaves, and why waves and their chorus of voices to the heart of the listening earth - when I sing to make you dance.

That reminds one of the still life of a painter such as Chardin, who by his manner of painting a loaf of bread and a flask of wine seems to invest them with the mystery and beauty of a far landscape. But all true art is for ever discovering such connections and likenesses, finding the same significance in all things and making them all seem friendly to the spirit. When art ceases from these discoveries the life dies out of it and it becomes a game of mere combinations and repetitions, like so much of our minor poetry.

Some perhaps will refuse to fall under the spell of this Indian poet because his philosophy is not theirs. If it seems to us fantastic and alien, before we despise it we should ask ourselves the question, what is our philosophy? We are very restless in thought, but we have none that poets can express. For it is either pure theory or of the nature of scientific experiment. At best it is applied coldly to life rather than drawn out of life with the warmth of experience still in it. If we cannot share the Indian poet's faith, we must at least acknowledge that he has not sacrificed his reason to it. He plays neither an artistic nor an intellectual game. As a poet should be, he is so simple that anyone can understand him; yet this does not mean that there is little to understand. "From the words of the poet," he says, "men take what meanings please them, yet their last meaning points to thee."

16 November, 1912

### THE ATHENAEUM

p583(W)

*Gitanjali (Song Offerings)*. A Collection of Prose Translations made by Rabindra Nath Tagore from the Original Bengali. With an Introduction by W. B. Yeats. (Chiswick Press for the India Society.)

MR. TAGORE's translations are of trance-like beauty; their negation of movement and colour, and the deliberate flavourlessness of their simplicity are appropriate to the vein of essentially Oriental mysticism which supplies throughout the poet's inspiration. Mr. Yeats, in his eloquent, if somewhat impetuous Introduction to the volume, suggests that for a parallel in Western literatures to Mr. Tagore's achievement we must go to Blake or St. Francis. But to compare Mr. Tagore with St. Francis is as if one compared a crystal or, might one say, a dew-pond with a fountain; and Blake's accents seem like those of an ungoverned child beside the serenity, the achieved calm, of this century of Indian meditations. Their theme

is the soul, the soul of the poet, its recognition of a spirit of love in the beauty of nature, and the process of self-discipline, dedication, and withdrawal by which it seeks and finds, whether in the course or the cessation of its human existence, its longed-for union with the Divine Lover. The poet's experience has its moments of rapture:

"Ah! the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth."

It has its moments, too, of confidence in life and, as it were, of conscious conquest:

"No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight. Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love."

The expanding sentiment wins here from the author, even through the alien medium of our English prose, a rhythm which in its strength and melody might recall familiar passages in the Psalms or Solomon's Song. But his normal tone is not the tone of warmth and passivity; and in spite of sustained beauty and spiritual accomplishment, his work exercises, upon a Western mind at any rate, a somewhat numbing effect, and one must doubt whether it is really consonant with the deepest meanings of the life of which it offers a key. Its quality is undeniable:-

"Yes, I know, this is nothing but thy love, O beloved of my heart - this golden light that dances upon the leaves, these idle clouds sailing across the sky, this passing breeze leaving its coolness upon my forehead. The morning light has flooded my eyes - this is thy message to my heart, Thy face is bent from above, thy eyes look down on my eyes, and my heart has touched thy feet"

The perfection of this leaves us wondering what finer effects it can possess in the original. Clearly it is not for nothing that Mr. Tagore's name is known through the length and breadth of India.

16 November, 1912

**THE NATION**

p320-322(W)

## AN INDIAN MYSTIC

**"Gitanjali (Song-Offerings),"**

**By RABINDRA NATH TAGORE.**

**A Collection of Prose Translations made by the Author from the Original Bengali. With an Introduction by W. B. YEATS (India Society. 10s. 6d. net.)**

THE poetry of mysticism – the poetry which is inspired by, and seeks to express, the soul's direct vision of reality – is, or should be, the crown of literature, since it claims to fulfil the secret purpose of all art. It is seldom met in its perfection; for it demands in its creator a rare balance of qualities – a disciplined craftsmanship, an untamed ardour, a fearless and vivid intuition of truth. The mystic poet, in fact, if he would fulfil his high office as revealer of reality, must be at once – and in a supreme degree – an artist, a lover, and a seer.

Genius of this type will always be rare; but its importance for the spiritual progress of humanity cannot easily be exaggerated. The mystical poets, like the prophets of old, are the "eyes of the race". The theme of their lyrics and odes is not, as some have imagined, a thing strange and remote from us; but, on the contrary, something so near – so closely interwoven with the stuff of our spirits – that we cannot stand away from it, and see it as it is, without their help. Because they see all things lit up by the Uncreated Light, and perpetually discover in the multiplicity of creation the infinite simplicity of God, they give to us our most sublime and disinterested vision of the world and of life. That vision is not the fluid and indefinite creation of metaphysical sentimentality; it is actual, practical, and poignantly alive. The width of its sweep is balanced by the direct intimacy of its appeal to the individual soul. It is transfused by the passionate love which is the expression of spirit's instinct for its source and home.

This is the vision, these qualities, which we look for in mystical poetry of the highest class. We find them alike in the writings of the East and the West. In the Sufi Jelalu d'Din Rumi, in the Franciscan

Jaopone da Todi, in the austere, yet passionate Carmelite St John of the Cross. All these, whatever their formal creed, speak, as Saint Martin said, "the same language, for they come from the same country" – the country which Augustine called "no mere vision, but a home." To their small company another name must now be added – that of the Bengali poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore. Only the classics of mystical literature provide a standard by which this handful of "Song Offerings" can be appraised or understood. These hundred-and-three lyrics, here translated by the author into rhythmical prose of singular beauty, pre-suppose as their origin that same personal and first-hand experience of the spiritual order – so changeless and so various, so ineffable and so homely – which is reported to us by the great mystics of every period. Here we find again that total independence of time, that almost complete independence of place, which characterise those same mystics at the height of their development; that same crystalline vision of the "Beauty so old and so new", that same exalted passion for reality. Many a phrase is here and might have been written by the Christian contemplatives – by St Augustine or by Eckhart, by Mechthild of Magdeburg, or Julian of Norwich – and nothing, perhaps, which these contemplatives would have failed to understand. Hence, for those interested in the spiritual history of man – the continuance in our own day of that living tradition of intercourse with reality which we owe to the mystical saints – the appearance of these poems is an event of great importance. From the point of view of pure literature, their high quality can hardly be contested; yet it is not mere literary excellence which their author has sought, nor is it here that their deepest interest lies. They are offerings, from finite to infinite – oblations, as their creator holds that all art should be, laid upon the altar of the world.

"From the words of the poet men take what meanings please them, yet their last meaning points to thee."

Rabindra Nath Tagore has long been famous in India as a poet of the first rank; celebrated, not only for his mystical songs, but for the beauty of his dramas, love poems, and patriotic hymns. Mr Yeats quotes a distinguished Bengali doctor as saying:

"We have other poets, but none that are his equal; we call this the epoch of Rabindra Nath. No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the west of India to Burmah wherever Bengali is spoken. He is the first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of Life itself, and that is why we give him our love."

In these words, "he has spoken out of Life itself", we seem to have the clue to that which is most distinctive in Mr. Tagore's poetry. Coming out of the midst of life, it accepts life in its wholeness as a revelation of the Divine mind. This is not the "Via Negativa" of the Neoplatonists, but a positive mysticism, which presses forward to a "more abundant life." The idea of God which informs it, is far from that concept of a static and transcendent Absolute which we have been taught to regard as the centre of Hindu mysticism. The Deity to whom these songs are offered is at once the striving spirit of Creation, and that Creation's eternal source and end; both infinite and intimate, "dark with excess of light," and yet the friend and lover of each soul.

"Thou art the sky, and thou art the nest as well."

Since He is in one of His aspects the energetic Spirit of life, active in His own Creation, inhabiting the flux, this God may best be found and worshipped, not in the temple "with doors all shut," but within the rich and various world of things:

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!"

"Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all forever."

The flux of life, the living, changeable, onward-pressing universe of modern vitalistic thought, is the stuff from which this seer has woven his vision of truth.

"All things rush on, they stop not, they look not behind, no power can hold them back, they rush on."

Yet he sees God in this storm of Becoming, controlling each manifestation of life from greatest to least, pressing all things on and up towards Perfection:-

"Hidden in the heart of things thou art nourishing seeds into sprouts, buds into blossoms, and ripening flowers into fruitfulness."

God, then, is conceived by this mystic as pre-eminently the Creator of life and of beauty; he is the Divine Minstrel, and all creation is His song. Like Richard Rolle, the English hermit, who called the last state of the transfigured soul the "state of heavenly song," he is driven again and again to musical imagery in the attempt to express his vision of the universe:

"I know not how thou singest, my Master! I ever listen in silent amazement."

"The light of thy music illumines the world. The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on."

Music has seemed to many of the great contemplatives the least inadequate of all symbols of reality, eluding the snares which lurk in more concrete images. Because they discern in creation a harmony which is beyond the span of other minds, they have heard, as this last of their descendants, "the harp of the road break out in sweet music of pain," and have felt a special obligation laid upon the poet to add his song to the melodies which fill the universe. St Francis of Assisi held that the perfect friar should not only pray, but sing; and Catherine of Genoa prized gay music upspringing in the heart as evidence of its union with God. So here the creation of fresh beauty is presented as man's best approach to Perfect Beauty:

"I know thou takest pleasure in my singing. I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence"

"I touch by the edge of the far-spreading wing of my song thy feet, which I could never aspire to reach."

As Abt Vogler claimed for the musician a special initiation into the secrets of the universe, so for this poet it is the singer who is admitted to the peculiar intimacy of God. His song-offering is the sacrament of his ineffable communion with the Divine Nature; and it is from this personal and impassioned intercourse – so characteristic of the mystical consciousness – that his loveliest melodies are born.

"You came down from your throne and stood at my cottage door.

"I was singing all alone in a corner, and the melody caught your ear. You came down and stood at my cottage door.

"Masters are many in your hall, and songs are sung there at all hours. But the simple carol of this novice struck at your love. One plaintive little strain mingled with the great music of the world, and with a flower for a prize you came down and stood at my cottage door."

Yet this personal and secret ecstasy is but one side of the mystic's complete experience; it is balanced by the wide, impersonal consciousness of the eternal Divine immanence in creation, of the incessant and infinitely various self-revelation of God.

"The steps that I heard in my play-room are the same that are echoing from star to star"

This is the aspect of his vision which the poet offers to his fellow-men; the "flaming truth" which he is trying to make actual for the race. For him the footsteps of Reality are plainly audible, the light of Reality is everywhere to be seen. It is the supreme business of the artist to heal the eyes that see not, and the ears that cannot hear.

"Have you not heard his silent steps? He comes, comes, ever comes.

"Every moment and every age, every day and every night, he comes, comes, ever comes.

"Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, 'He comes, comes, ever comes.'"

7 December, 1912

**THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**

p5c1(DE)

## EAST AND WEST

"Gitanjali (Song Offerings) by Rabindra Nath Tagore " A Collection of Prose Translations made by the Author from the original Bengali, with an Introduction by W. B. Yeats. (Chiswick Press) 10s 6d. net

"We write long books where no page, perhaps, has any quality to make writing a pleasure. being confident in some general design, just as we fight and make money and fill our heads with politics – all dull things in the doing – while Mr Tagore, like the Indian civilisation itself, has been content to discover the soul and surrender himself to its spontaneity." All that is true enough, but it may still be said that by so commending the poems in this volume, by prescribing them as an antidote against Western folly and vanity, Mr. Yeats seems to suggest that Mr. Tagore's poetry is essentially different in kind and intention from that of poets and mystics nearer home. That would be no real service. Mr. Yeats himself compares these writings with those of St Francis, Thomas A Kempis, St John of the Cross, with Blake's. And it is in their resemblance to the poems of comparatively modern Western poets, rather than in their differences from them, that they are most significant

"Have you not heard his silent steps? He comes, comes, ever comes

Every moment and every age, every day and every night he comes, comes, ever comes

Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, "He comes, comes, ever comes "

That is the theme of "The Hound of Heaven." "On the shores of endless worlds children meet. The infinite sky is motionless overhead, and the restless water is boisterous. On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances" – that inevitably recalls Wordsworth. "When I bring to you coloured toys, my child, I understand why there is such a play of colours in clouds, on water, and why flowers are painted in tints – when I give

coloured toys to you, my child" : the germ of one of Patmore's best-known odes is there; as that of "Crossing the Bar" in the poem beginning, "The evening star will come out when thy voyage is done, and the plaintive notes of the twilight melodies be struck up from the King's gateway." Even Walt Whitman is recalled by the lines – "O Thou, the last fulfilment of Life, Death, my death, come and whisper to me!" And over and over again this book echoes with Traherne, with Herbert, and with Vaughan.

This is not in the least to suggest that Mr. Yeats has lost his sense of proportion. As he himself says, it is "not their strangeness" – it is the unity and purity, the perfect simplicity and directness of Mr. Tagore's poems that set them apart. His work is all of one kind. He concentrates and clarifies what a less sure spiritual vision catches only in glimpses and records haltingly. And with it all, he keeps close to earth, to everyday life. There is a tender humour in his voice, his children are children, his dowers the flowers of the wayside. The poorest, the lowliest, and the lost are his friends. We need no esoteric knowledge to understand him. Peace is for the asking, is the burden of his message, if only heart and mind will give it welcome.

"No poet," one of Mr. Tagore's own countrymen told Mr. Yeats, "no poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us." His songs are sung from the west of India into Burma, wherever Bengali is spoken. He was a novelist at nineteen. His plays, written when he was but little older, are still played in Calcutta. The tradition, alike of his race and of his own long-distinguished family of artists and philosophers, has been in his inspiration. For two hours every morning, from three till five, he sits "in immovable reverie upon the nature of God." His father the Maha Rishi, once, while being rowed upon a river, "fell into contemplation because of the beauty of the landscape, and the rowers waited for eight hours before they could continue their journey." The philosopher, Dvijendranath, too, Mr. Tagore's brother, shares St. Francis's strange secret of love; the squirrels scamper down to meet him, and birds perch on his fingers.

In the East, indeed, there is an inherited nobility of office as well as of blood. The present

connoisseur of the Mikado – a little, dark-skinned man whom Mr. Yeats met in a Museum – is the fourteenth of his family to hold the post. But though such a tradition and so wide and eager a public are both of inestimable service, they certainly cannot in themselves make a poet. Nor has Mr. Tagore come to the fulness of his powers, and the assurance of his wisdom and insight, without hard experience and struggle. "That training is the most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of a tune." "My song has put off her adornments," he writes in another poem; "no more doll's decoration for me." It is almost as difficult to attain to any real mastery over an art as it is to mastery over self; "He whom I enclose with my name is weeping in this dungeon. My own little self ... he makes the dust rise from the earth with swagger; he adds a loud voice to every word that I utter." Or, again, "Away from the sight of thy face my heart knows no rest nor respite, and my work becomes an endless toil in a shoreless sea of toil." Or, as Mr. Yeats expresses something of the same thought: "Four-fifths of our energy is spent in the quarrel with bad taste, whether in our own minds or in the minds of others."

None the less, however far from the world the true inward peace may be, the path to vision is through "the healthful dust of the earth." "No, I will never shut the door of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight." From direct earthly experience the poet draws a symbol of the eternal journey: "Your worshipper of old wanders ever hungry for favour still refused. In the eventide when fires and shadows mingle with the gloom of dust, he wearily comes back to the ruined temple with hunger in his heart." "Because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well. The child cries out when from the right breast its mother takes it away, in the very next moment to find in the left one its consolation."

It is this intimacy of the poet's mind with reality that gives these poems their strength and substance. Mr. Tagore uses things as if they were thoughts. Here and there his verse recalls the direct, wordless commerce of a dream. His poems are of the very stuff of imagination; and yet gay and vivid with a fresh and delicious fancy. "There

comes the morning with golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently of the colour of a flower. But yet, it must be remembered, we have only translations of his work - translations of poetry into prose. What has been unavoidably lost in the process - the atmosphere, the rhythmical significance - must be immeasurable. One complete poem - after so many fragments - will reveal the beauty of this prose, as well perhaps as dimly suggest its original:

In desperate hope I go and search for her in all the corners of my room; I found her not,

My house is small and what once has gone from it can never be regained

But infinite is thy mansion, my Lord, and seeking her I have come to thy door

I stand under the golden canopy of thy evening sky and I lift my eager eyes on thy face

I have come to the brink of eternity from which nothing can vanish no hope, no happiness, no vision of a face seen through tears

Oh, dip my emptied life into that ocean, plunge it into the deepest fulness. Let me for once feel that lost sweet touch in the allness of the universe

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1913

14 January, 1913

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

pbcl: D

NEW BOOKS

THE INDIAN POET

**Gitanjali.** By Rabindra Nath Tagore. With an Introduction by W. B. Yeats: The India Society. Pp xvi. 64. 10s. 6d. net.

"We call this the epoch of Rabindra Nath." The distinguished Indian gentleman who made this significant remark to Mr. Yeats probably meant by "we" Bengal rather than India at large; possibly he only meant the elect and cultured fellowship that obeys the movement called *Brahma Samaj* - a lofty, eclectic creed singularly combining rationalistic reform with mystical revival. But, at any rate, the poems of Rabindra Nath (and, it seems, the melodies the poet has composed for them) are enormously popular and influential wherever Bengali is spoken, and it would be strange if some of those who delight in them did not consciously recognise in them the qualities most noticeable to a European - qualities which unmistakably have the air of marking the climax of some great spiritual and mental rhythm, of marking, in fact, an epoch. The age of Shakespeare, however, did not call itself by the title; and it says something remarkable for the alertness and vividness of Indian consciousness today that the sonorous name of Rabindra Nath Tagore should have been already acknowledged as the name of the present Indian epoch - perhaps one should even say of the present Oriental epoch. For it seems not unlikely that this poet may win himself a spiritual empire comparable with that of the classic Persians; the future may see in his work the expression not merely of his race but of the East - at least, of the non-Turanian East. Certainly we Occidentals can scarcely fail to perceive in these exquisite and noble poems that peculiar artistic greatness which seems necessarily to imply a general great condition of life surrounding and inspiring the artist; we, from the

midst of industrial triumph and commercial supremacy - we can scarcely fail to perceive this envious admiration. The abundance and simplicity - to borrow two of Mr. Yeats's epithets - the inevitable ease with which profound things are expressed, the mingling of delighted sensuous imagery with keenest spiritual experience, the mingling, too, of intense personality with the sense of a whole community's impulse and activity, the formal shapeliness of the poems (extraordinarily noticeable in the beautiful English translation made by the poet himself, and sure sign of an elaborate and masterful technique in the original) - these are qualities not to be missed; and they are qualities which, in co-existence, have perhaps never yet appeared as the result of individual genius alone. The poems of Rabindra Nath could not credibly come except on the crest of some large and vital impulse moving through a nation, the *milieu* for such work as this must either be the youthful vigour of a new civilisation achieving again some positive ideal mastery in life, realising in itself at large an active sense of mystical or metaphysical significance in life. Mr. Yeats excellently puts this, the most obvious and exciting quality to a European mind in Rabindra Nath's poems, when he says that to read these lyrics today must surely give something like the sensation an Englishman of the time of Richard II would have had on reading translations of Dante and Petrarch.

So the epoch of Rabindra Nath is not simply a literary epoch. "He is the first among our saints" - this is another significant remark made by the Indian gentleman already quoted, - "he is first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of Life itself; and that is why we give him our love". Certainly there is no "refusal to live," accompanying Rabindra Nath's austere sense of some mystical, supersensuous reality in life; rather that seems to have made his sense of immediate familiar life more glowing and joyous. And as this is his obvious greatness to a European, and admittedly his most notably characteristic to an Indian, it may be worth while to see if it is explicable. No oriental poet could be more aware of the sweetness and brightness of common everyday life. Moreover, the perfect continuity of thought in his lyrics is like nothing that can be

found in the lyrics, say, of Hafiz; whatever the form of Rabindra Nath's poems may be in Bengali, it is evident from the translation that he does not rely on rigid continuity of form to get unity. In fact, there is no radical difference between his lyrical art and that of Europe. The strangeness we find in him is entirely in his matter and his impulse; he does not give the sense of a *strange art* which practically all other Oriental lyrics give. In a work, Rabindra Nath seems to be an Oriental profoundly influenced by European thought, but not in the least disorientated by the influence; we should rather say that the European influence has been completely orientalised in him. The old and distinguished Tagore family has a long tradition of English scholarship, and of interest not only in Indian but Anglo-Indian affairs. And his father, Devendra Nath Tagore, was a great figure in the theistic movement of the Brahma Samaj, which seems itself an expression of desire, local at first but soon widespread, to add the vigours of European reason to Indian mysticism. But when the former threatened to oust the latter Devendra Nath led the conservatives in the schism, and insisted on keeping the Brahma Samaj an essential Oriental religion; and so his son, Rabindra Nath, whatever Europe may have done for him, is Indian first and last. It would, no doubt, be going too far to speak of Rabindra Nath as an outcome of the Brahma Samaj, which is itself probably the outcome of a much larger impulse. But the characteristic of the epoch of Rabindra Nath is plainly mysticism "speaking out of Life itself", so speaking, in India at least, for the first time. And it seems unavoidable to see in this some fusion of Western thought with Eastern. The East maintains its alert sense of what is behind life, but the West brings its vivid sense of the immediate value of life itself. A poet appeared just at the critical moment to voice this characteristic in noble and astonishing lovely songs - songs that leave one with a vision of life standing enraptured amidst its marvellous world of sensuous experience, but always tense with expecting the awakening out of this coloured, musical dream into the real ecstasy of seeing its mystical Brother and Master.

Lascelles Abercrombie.

21 January, 1913

**THE DAILY NEWS AND LEADER**

p4c3:D)

**Section : A BOOK OF THE DAY**

### AN INDIAN POET

**"Gitanjali" (Song Offerings). By Rabindra Nath Tagore. Introduction by W. B. Yeats. The India Society. 10s. 6d.**

Twenty years ago Mr. Rudyard Kipling turned his flashlight upon India. It was a revelation of externals, vivid and illuminating, but leaving the mystery of that inscrutable world untouched. The vision was the vision of a journalist, swift and superficial - of a mind essentially Cockney, governed by the crudest views of Empire and charged with that pride of racial ascendancy that makes the understanding of a strange people impossible. But the revelation nevertheless served a useful purpose. It did what, according to Bagehot, Eton succeeded in doing in regard to Greece. Eton did not teach a boy Greek, he said, but it gave him a strong suspicion that there was such a language. Mr. Kipling did not reveal India; but he made the man in the street (who happens to govern India) realise that there was such a country. He did not set him thinking about India, but he did make him talk about it - in a superior, provincial way it is true, but still talking.

It is not to be hoped that the man in the street will go about chanting the lyrics of Rabindra Nath Tagore as he used to chant the songs of Mr. Kipling; yet these lyrics would take him nearer to the secret heart of India, perhaps, than anything that has yet appeared in books. The mere fact that they are the popular poetry of the people would alone have given him a revelation of the mind of India. Mr. Yeats, in his introduction, quotes the opinions of distinguished Indians as to the popularity of Rabindra Nath's poetry. There is, according to these, no poet who is so famous in Europe as Mr. Tagore is throughout India. He is that rare thing, a prophet who is honoured in his own country and in his own day. "He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the West of India into Burma, wherever Bengali is spoken". He comes of a family

illustrious for centuries for its intellectual and spiritual products, and he is to-day only the most famous of several members of it distinguished in art and philosophy.

### **The Soul of the Ages**

It is difficult to think of these poems as translations, renderings of the originals into English by the poet himself – so perfect is the mastery of the verbal and rhythmical resources of our language. But it is the content more than the form which make them one of the most significant books that have appeared in our time. "I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days", says Mr. Yeats, "reading it in railway trains or on top of omnibuses and in restaurants and I have often had to close it lest some stranger should see how much it moved me". The confession will be understood by anyone who is sensitive to beauty, either of the natural or the spiritual world. To begin chanting these lyrics aloud is to pass majestically into a realm of spiritual ecstasy, where the vision that comes to us so momentarily and fleetingly seems the constant and habitual outlook of the soul. The songs are touched with the reminiscence of many influences. Marcus Aurelius and St. Augustine, Amiel and Whitman, and many other saint or sage seem to flit across the mind and to touch the reverie of the Oriental mystic with the dynamic spirit of the west. For he is no mere introspective dreamer, brooding upon eternity and renouncing the flesh:

"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.

"Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim

"My world will light its hundred different lamps with thy flame and place them before the altar of thy temple.

"Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love."

The senses are the medium through which his converse with spiritual flows, and nature and all the activities of life become transfigured by the inner light. It is as though the material venture of life is

instinct with the spirit of joy and of singing, and he is a part of the joy and the song:

"When I go from hence let this be my parting word, that what I have seen is unsurpassable.

"I have tasted of the hidden honey of this lotus that expands on the ocean of light and thus am I blessed – let this be my parting word.

"In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play and here have I caught sight of him that is formless."

For in the beauty and the love that invests all things – the flowers and the starry sky, the smile that flits on the infant's face, the playing children by the seashore, the woman with the pitcher at the well – he sees God made manifest.

### **Thames and Ganges**

The largesse of love and beauty is inexhaustible.

"Thy gifts to us mortals fulfil all our needs and yet run back to the undiminished

"The flower sweetens the air with its perfume, yet its last service is to offer itself to thee

"Thy worship does not impoverish the world"

And this song of universal worship is touched with no shadow of doubt or despair. Even the passion of parting is charged with an exaltation that turns sorrow into song –

"Death, thy servant, is at my door He has crossed the unknown sea and brought thy call to my home

"The night is dark and my heart is fearful – yet I will take up the lamp, open the gates and bow to him my welcome It is thy messenger who stands at my door

"I will worship him with folded hands, and with tears. I will worship him placing at his feet the treasure of my heart.

"He will go back with his errand done, leaving a dark shadow on my morning, and in my desolate home only my forlorn self will remain as my last offering to thee "

This is, indeed, a book of the soul – not the soul of the ascetic, who rejects life, but the soul of

the seer and the lover who finds life the visible expression of the eternal. "Oh East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet", said Mr. Kipling. In these poems the twain do meet, for they touch that ultimate chord of humanity which is the same by the Thames as it is by the Ganges and they touch it with a mingling of the thought of the West with the rapture and reverie of the East that is unique. Mr. Yeats says that the original poems have beauties of stress and movement that cannot be rendered in English. It may, be so; but it is true nevertheless that in their English form they reveal a poet of undeniable authority and a spiritual influence singularly in touch with modern thought and modern needs.

15 February, 1913

### THE SPECTATOR

p278-279(W)

#### RECENT VERSE

[The following report is the last paragraph of a long review of books of poems published in the previous year]

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Our two volumes of Indian poetry represent, the one an occidental culture working in an Oriental atmosphere, the other the pure inspiration of the East. Mrs. Naidu's charming *The Bird of Time*, for which Mr. Gosse has written an appreciative preface, gives in the classic measures of English verse the classic passions, but with an exotic colouring. "A Rajput Love Song" is not different, except in its metaphors, from Western love-songs, and the beautiful "The Call to Evening Prayer" shows a catholicity of religious feeling which is cosmopolitan rather than Indian. Sometimes, however, as in the folk songs, in "Vasant Panchami" and "In Salutation to the Eternal Peace" we find a mood which is different in kind from our own. *The Gitanjali* or "Song Offerings" of Rabindra Nath Tagore are wonderful in their way, though Mr. Yeat's Introduction is perhaps written in too hyperbolic a strain. The author is a thinker of the Brama-Samaj school, and his poetry, Mr. Yeats

tells us, is widely read and revered among his country men. Even in a prose translation it is possible to realise something of the spacious wisdom and joy of the original.

1 April, 1913

### THE GLOBE

p6c2(DE)

#### Section: TO-DAY'S BOOK

### "GITANJALI OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE"

#### POET AND SAINT

This is the real thing. Of course, in the translation, even though done by the author himself, we lost almost all the rhythm and the delicate allusiveness which those who can read them in the original assure us mark out these "Song Offerings" as attaining the highest literary workmanship yet known in India, but much remains. It is the thought rather than the vehicle in which it is conveyed that stamps the work of Mr. Tagore as something altogether out of the common, something which has upon it the imprint of the gods. Here is a Saint who is not afraid to live, a Saint who dares to mingle with common things of the world, fearing no defilement from their touch, and a Poet, the very closeness of whose contact with Earth lifts him ever nearer to Heaven. Within this man's grasp are the Eternal Verities, the Everlasting Yea, and the grasp is never relaxed. He makes the most of what we strive for seem so small, and yet he makes life itself seem so large. He has the outlook of the great Saints of the Middle Ages, of Thomas a Kempis and of Francis of Assisi, and with all that tender love of Nature in herself which is the gift of the Renaissance.

We do not pretend that he is easy. A new voice can never make all its cadences felt at first, and in Mr. Tagore's case there is the additional difficulty of the intellectual division between East and West. We

\*"Gitanjali," by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan and Co., 4s. 6d. net)

advise those who read him to give, before they do so, particular attention to the admirable Introduction which Mr. W. B. Yeats, himself a poet of a similar strain, has written to this volume. Mr. Yeats quotes the words of a Bengali Doctor of Medicine:

"We have other poets, but none that are his equal, we call this the epoch of Rabindranath. No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the west of India into Burmah wherever Bengali is spoken. He was already famous at nineteen when he wrote his first novel; and plays, written when he was but little older, are still played in Calcutta. "I do so much admire the completeness of his life, when he was very young he wrote much of natural objects, he would sit all day in his garden, from his twenty-fifth year or so to his thirty-fifth perhaps, when he had a great sorrow, he wrote the most beautiful love poetry in our language"; and then he said, with deep emotion "words can never express what I owed at seventeen to his love poetry. After that his art grew deeper, it became religious and philosophical; all the aspirations of mankind are in his hymns. He is the first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of Life itself, and that is why we give him our love."

No doubt that expresses the attitude of the educated Indian towards this new poet, but we shall venture to add to it. Mr. Yeats' own words, since they are, perhaps, of even more value to the Western mind:

I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me. These lyrics - which are in the original, my Indians tell me, full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention - display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long. The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes.

Mr. Tagore's philosophy is that of the perfect surrender to perfect love. Without apparently any

idea of making a comparison at all, he forces us to compare our lives with his, and yet he asks no more than the acknowledgement that for him his way is best. Didactic criticism is impossible to this, yet the deepest criticism of all lies hidden in his poems. Take, for example, this little gem,

The child who is decked with prince's robes and who has jewelled chains round his neck loses all pleasure in his play, his dress hampers him at every step

In fear that it may be frayed or stained with dust, he keeps himself from the world, and is afraid even to move

Mother, it is no gain, thy bondage of finery, if it keep one shut off from the healthful dust of the earth, if it rob of the right of entrance to the great fair of common human life

Or this,

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground, and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!

Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our Master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation, he is bound with us all for ever.

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow

There is the saint who is not aloof from life but one with it, knowing that it is also one with God.

Is there anyone of us who, in the pauses of this hurrying existence has not felt the deep truth of such words as these?

"Prisoner, tell me, who was it that bound you?"

"It was my master," said the prisoner, "I thought I could outdo everybody in the world in wealth and power, and I amassed in my own treasure-house the money due to my king. When sleep overcame me I

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lay upon the bed that was for my lord and on waking up I found I was a prisoner in my own treasure-house "

"Prisoner, tell me who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?"

"It was I," said the prisoner, "who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive, leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip "

We should like to quote much more as showing whether Mr. Tagore's thought leads in the eternal conflict, but we must forbear. We have referred, however to the Nature-spirit in him, and , therefore, we must be permitted to give one example of what we mean.

The sleep that flits on baby's eyes does anybody know from where it comes? Yes, there is a rumour that it has its dwelling where, in the fairy village among shadows of the forest dimly lit with glow-worms, there hang two timid buds of enchantment. From there it comes to kiss baby's eyes.

The smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps - does anybody know where it was born? Yes, there is a rumour that a young pale beam of a crescent moon touched the edge of a vanishing autumn cloud, and there the smile was first born in the dream of a dew-washed morning - the smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps.

The sweet, soft freshness that blooms on baby's limbs - does anybody know where it was hidden so long? Yes, when the mother was a young girl it lay pervading her heart in tender and silent mystery of love - the sweet, soft freshness that has bloomed on baby's limbs.

These are not poems to be read hastily or carelessly; they demand a certain surrender if their value is to be understood. Perhaps all really great work does. Mr. Ernest Rhys has described the "Gitanjali" as "a spiritual revelation". The expression is no whit[sic] too strong and with it we entirely associate ourselves.

19 April, 1913

THE NEW STATESMAN

p58(V)

## A GREAT INDIAN POET

**Gitanjali. (Song Offerings.)** By RABINDRA NATH TAGORE. A collection of prose translations made by the author from the original Bengali. With an introduction by W. B. Yeats. Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.

Mr. Yeats, in his eloquent introduction to these "Song Offerings," says of them: "The works of a supreme culture - they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes." The thought is a pregnant one, and summarises the artistic expression, not only of Mr. Tagore, but of all the great mystical poets and prophets. The self-realisation of the great artist is, obviously, a complex thing. He does not write solely out of his own inner consciousness, but, if he be a poet, as the representative of the collective aspirations of his race and the revealer of the transcendental forces immanent within him, his race, and all mankind. Within the prism of his imagination are fused these elements, individual, national, and cosmic, and woe to his renown if, out of this mysterious germination, there emerges not an artistic presence, which, be it the repository of a thousand worlds and a myriad visions, is not immediate and actual in its appeal. In our own sad island we have many artists who compose their isolated chords and call them symphonies, not merely because of an intellectual activism which cuts the secret current affiliating them to the collective thought of the multitude, but also because that thought is not collective, shattered into bewildered fragments. They are no backwoodsmen; they weave their cat's cradles in the public place, not in the corner. It is perhaps because of this that we read Mr. Tagore as we might have read the Pacific, had we stood with Cortez upon Darien. His lyrics are tremulous with life; like waves, they splash up at us with greedy vitality, passionately themselves, yet interpenetrated with an inscrutable harmony that invests them with the accumulated spiritual memories of mankind, and colours them with the hues of eternity. That is why they are "the work of a supreme culture," in that they are the

creation of personal impetus yoked with impersonal discovery. They are most elusive of analysis, because their mystical quality, unlike that of the more static Indian poet-philosophers, is radiant with incessant variety. Mr. Yeats must have meant this by his simile of the grass and the rushes. "Deliverance," says Mr. Tagore, "is not for me in renunciation," and the spirit of joyful acceptance, restlessly pursuing the manifold incarnations of spiritual beauty, endows his prose-lyrics with the nimbleness of flame. They are genuine and familiar, like the earth, because they have the simplicity, the prodigality, the sublime activity and confidence of the earth. The vast panorama of life and death and their tremendous melodies, only the paean can fit their theme. "Because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well. The child cries out, when from the right breast the mother takes it away, in the very next moment to find in the left one its consolation." The impatience, the rapture of the visionary quest of the spirit for communion with the universal, strike into these songs to such an extent that they burst into an iridescence of parable, metaphor, trope and allegory, echoing in their cadences the adoration of St. Francis and of Wordsworth, of Whitman and of the Song of Songs. The infection of "brave, translunary things" energises them into an extraordinary rapidity and gaiety of movement. It is the poet entering the gates of infinity, another David, with tabor in hand, and flowers of diverse colours tangled in his hair. Many of them have the early morning sprightliness and dewiness of some of our own singers enhanced by their May-day procession of delicate images, and the Indian bard, in contrast to his ascetic brethren, unravelling their sombre imaginings, stands forth Aurora's poet, the young Tithonus, before he was wizened and a "slug-a-bed." Others again are touched with the elegiac fragrance that surrounded Heine with the aura of the old Hellenic world that was lost -

Thy sunbeam comes upon this earth of mine with arms outstretched, and stands at my door the live-long day to carry back to thy feet clouds made of my tears and sighs and songs. With fond delight thou wrappest about thy stormy breast that mantle of misty cloud, turning it into numberless shapes and folds, and colouring it with hues ever-changing. It is so light and so fleeting, tender and tearful and dark,

that is why thou lovest it, O thou spotless and serene. And that is why it may cover thy awful white light with its pathetic shadows.

But the inspiration born of the identity of man with the creative impulse, the Psalmic "Dayspring from on high", beyond the bourn of alien nationality, at the same time preserves them in their own originality. That authentic quality, even though it appears in the outlandish garb of translation, is unquestionably Mr. Tagore's. This slender volume of lyrics, which he has himself put into the most precise and rhythmical English, is pre-eminently remarkable for its craftsmanship. These poems in miniature are thronged with images drawn out of an inexhaustible reservoir of suggestion. They blaze out upon the pages in meteoric splendour. But there is no waste, no surplusage, none of the inconsequence of an ultra-generosity - they are an intricate design in which the unity is realised by an aesthetic process as intricate, but whose total appeal is as single as it is immediate and actual. There are no blurred outlines, and there is no loss of independence in the particular, through its correlation with the general impression. All the great mystics have this sharpness and transparency of effect, be their expression bald or copious. Let your mystic be vague and nebulous, and he is usually second-rate and worthy your mistrust.

10 May, 1913

**THE GLOBE**

p7c5(DE)

### A BENGALI POET

### MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN LONDON

At 21, Cromwell Road, yesterday evening, under the auspices of the Indian Art, Dramatic and Friendly Society, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the eminent Bengali poet, read the unpublished manuscript of his lyric drama "Chitra". The reading occupied nearly an hour.

Mr. Montague, M.P., in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Tagore, said that on his Indian tour he heard

a story of a traveller who, entering a little village near Darjeeling, saw a group of men sitting round the evening fire reciting the ancient poems of their land, When they had finished a little boy of 12 - one of those lonely young travellers who wandered all over the country - unable to read and write, recited what proved to be the most moving item of the evening - a poem he had learned from hearing it read. The author of the poem, thus ranked with the classical writings of ancient day, was Mr. Tagore.

If he wished to know the feelings of the people towards a teacher of beauty, love, religion, and patriotism like Mr. Tagore, he would desire no better testimony than that of his village group; not could he wish for any better justification for his own admiration not only of Mr. Tagore's poetry, but also of his great, almost incalculable service to the Indian people.

10 May, 1913  
**THE TIMES**  
 p8c4(D)

### MR. TAGORE'S POETRY

The eminent Bengali poet, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, is again on a visit to this country, and at 21, Cromwell Road, yesterday evening, under the auspices of the Indian Art, Dramatic, and Friendly Society, he read the unpublished manuscript of his lyric drama Chitra. It tells the story of a king's daughter, powerful in statecraft but lacking female charm, granted by the gods the gift of incomparable beauty for a year, and hence successful in winning the love of a famous hermit, but retaining it after he knew the secret of her identity. The reading occupied nearly an hour, and was listened to with wrapt attention by an audience presided over by Sir Richard Stapely.

MR. MONTAGU, M. P. moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Tagore. He said that on his Indian tour he heard a story of a traveller who, entering a little village near Darjeeling, saw a group of men sitting round the evening fire reciting the ancient poems of their land. When they had finished a little boy of 12 - one of those lonely young travellers who wandered all over the country - unable to read or

write, recited what proved to be the most moving item of the evening - a poem he had learned from hearing it read. The author of the poem, thus ranked with the classical writings of ancient days, was Mr. Tagore. If he wished to know the feelings of the people towards a teacher of beauty, love, religion and patriotism like Mr. Tagore, he would desire no better testimony than that of his village group; nor could he wish for any better justification for his own admiration not only of Mr. Tagore's poetry, but also of his great, almost incalculable, service to the Indian people.

10 May, 1913

**THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**  
 p7c3(DE)

### AN INDIAN DRAMA

A READING BY  
**MR. RABINDRA NATH TAGORE**

*(Special to the "Westminster Gazette")*

The Indian Art, Dramatic, and Friendly Society is little more than twelve months old; but during its short career it has already made several serious efforts to fulfil its professed intention of bringing the East and the West into closer touch and of giving each a better understanding of the other. The latest of these efforts took the form of a meeting yesterday afternoon, at which Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, who is described as India's "world poet" - a man of great accomplishments, whose claim to the title of poet is undeniable, and who, by his works, has established an influence that is altogether remarkable over his fellow-countrymen of every class - read his own translation of his own play.

Before a large and deeply interested gathering that included many Anglo-Indians and many well-known men of letters, Mr. Tagore leant over his reading-desk - a tall, slim, figure dressed in tight-fitting garments of black; a face with finely chiselled features and with the deep-set eyes and a flowing beard in which grey is taking the place of black; and a strangely thin, but musical, voice. In the

dusk of late afternoon the shaded light that was directed upon his manuscript was reflected in a copper glow upon his face; but he read with hardly a gesture, without a break, and in the accents of a refined Englishman from the beginning of his short prose-poem to the end.

There were two gods in his caste – Madana, the god of Love, and Vasanta, the god of seasons, of spring, of youth. The hero, Arjuna, was a great warrior and the descendant of Kings. The heroine, Chitra – who gave her name to the play by way of title – was a princess. That she was a girl was a mishap not easily accounted for, since Shiva, the god of Life, had promised her grandsire none but male descendants. By way of repairing the mistake so far as possible, her father had brought her up as a boy, dressed as a prince, skilled in the use of arms, and worshipped by her people, to whom she was a valiant protector.

When Chitra saw Arjuna she regretted, for the first time, her manly costume and her manly ways. She threw herself at his head, but was received very coldly; for Arjuna had taken a vow of celibacy that was to bind him for a dozen years. She turned to the two gods for their aid; and from Vasanta she obtained the gift of beauty that was to remain to her for twelve months. Thus armed she renewed her attack upon the hero; and this time she proved irresistible. His vow was forgotten; and though she warned him that she was “an illusion” they began together a life of idyllic happiness.

Chitra's happiness was not complete, though. She feared that this borrowed beauty alone had made an impression on Arjuna, and that, as she put it, her body was her own rival. She begged that the gift might be taken from her, that she might reveal to him her “own true self, a nobler thing than this disguise.” There was no escape from the terms of the gift, though; and before the year was up Arjuna began to tire of the beauty that alone made an appeal to him. The villagers came to him for protection from marauding robbers – their princess, Chitra, who had been their protector, had gone on a mysterious pilgrimage, apparently, for none knew where she was. Chitra's hopes of winning him in her real person and her fears of losing him altogether were described in language that was full of passion and of real feeling, and embellished with descriptive touches, many of which, even in

their translated form, were delicious. Eventually, when the last hour of the year had come, Chitra made her confession. She became again the warrior princess, and wondered, almost hopelessly, if Arjuna could still love her as he did when her beauty was a thing to marvel at and she had little else to commend her. “My beloved,” he replied, “my life is full.” And that was all.

The reading was received with enthusiasm by the audience; and the poet – a quiet, almost a shy man – was overwhelmed with compliments by the many admirers who crowded round him before he could escape from the room.

*17 May, 1913*

#### **THE IRISH TIMES**

p9c1(D)

#### **Section : PLATFORM AND STAGE**

The production of Rabindranath Tagore's play, “Post Office”, at the Abbey Theatre to-night, should attract considerable attention in Dublin, not only because of the charitable object for which the performance is being given (the Building Fund of St. Enda's College), but for the play itself. Gordon Graig's scenery will be used in the play. Besides “The Post Office” the pupils of the St. Enda's College will perform “An Ri,” a play in one act, by P. H. Pearse. The performance will be the last given by the Abbey Company until the autumn.

*19 May, 1913*

#### **THE IRISH TIMES**

p9c5(D)

#### **ABBEY THEATRE**

#### **PERFORMANCE IN AID OF ST. EDNA'S COLLEGE**

A performance in aid of the building fund of St. Edna's College, Rathfarnham, took place in the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night. The appeal met with a generous response, there being a large

audience, and additional interest attached to the occasion on account of the inclusion in the programme of a play entitled "The Post Office". This was the first production in Dublin of the piece, which consists of two acts, and has been written by Rabindranath Tagore, an Indian writer, some of whose work has already attracted attention in portions of Western Europe. Mr. Lennox Robinson was responsible for the production. Mr. W. B. Yeats and others associated with the Abbey Theatre have already expressed a high opinion of Tagore, and their judgment was confirmed by the appreciation and applause extended to this specimen of the author's art by Dublin play-goers, as it was presented in its English dress on Saturday night. It is not a very imposing play, but it has many attractive and, at the same time, pathetic features. What it conveys is the call of death – the invitation from this world to the Great Beyond; and the medium used is the life of an adopted child, who is wasting away under the influence of some disease in an Oriental district. The malady defies the science and skill of the physicians, and death is figuratively represented by the receipt of a letter from the King – the Ruler of all realms – delivered through "The Post Office" which has recently been extended into the locality where the scene is laid. Though the play is designed to convey a solemn lesson it is not devoid of other aspects, and there is a certain element of humour blended with the pathos in which it abounds. For the Abbey players (the second company were the exponents of Tagore's art) there were some unusual circumstances associated with the production, the garb used for the pose being the principal one. The performance was realistic in a marked degree. The central character in the play – that of the child – was sustained in a sympathetic and impressive manner by Lilian Jagoe, hers being an outstanding triumph in the presentation, for she revealed a fine conception of the part. The death scene was especially good, and the audience expressed strong approval of the work. The other principal characters were presented with credit by Philip Guiry, Charles Power, Michael Couniffe, Thomas Barrett, and Sean Connally. The scenery (composed of Gordon Craig screens) was arranged by Mr. J. F. Barlow, and provided a very fine setting for the presentation of the piece.

The second portion of the entertainment also

provided an interesting attraction. It consisted of the presentation of "An Ri", a morality, in one act, by Mr. P. H. Pearse, the performance being in the capable hands of the students of St. Edna's College. It met with a very cordial reception, and both author and players were warmly applauded. At the close of the performance Mr. Pearse was called before the curtain, and, in the course of a short speech, acknowledged his thanks to the audience for the support extended to the appeal.

The Abbey orchestra, under the direction of Mr. John F. Larchet, played some enjoyable selections of music during the course of the entertainment.

21 May, 1913

### THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

p581-582(W)

### THE LIVING VOICE OF INDIA

#### INTERVIEW WITH MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*(By Our Special Commissioner)*

A curious double impression remains with me of my visit to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore. Halfway through our conversation we were interrupted. While Mr. Tagore talked with the interrupter before one window of the room I stood before the other window and talked about the poet's work with a young Indian gentleman who chanced to be present. With a gentle-voiced, reverent enthusiasm my interlocutor sketched in the national background and filled in the details of Mr. Tagore's life and work. Thus it came about that I carried away from the interview my own direct impressions of the wonderful personality of the poet and a second impression superimposed thereon of the same personality as he appears to the new race of Indians – the young, cultured, travelled men whose nationalism is deepened and refined by contact with European civilisation.

Mr. Tagore belongs to a famous Calcutta family. His father, known as *Maharshi*, or the Saint, was the founder of a religious society which later became incorporated in the Brahmo Samaj. He also founded the theological school for the train-

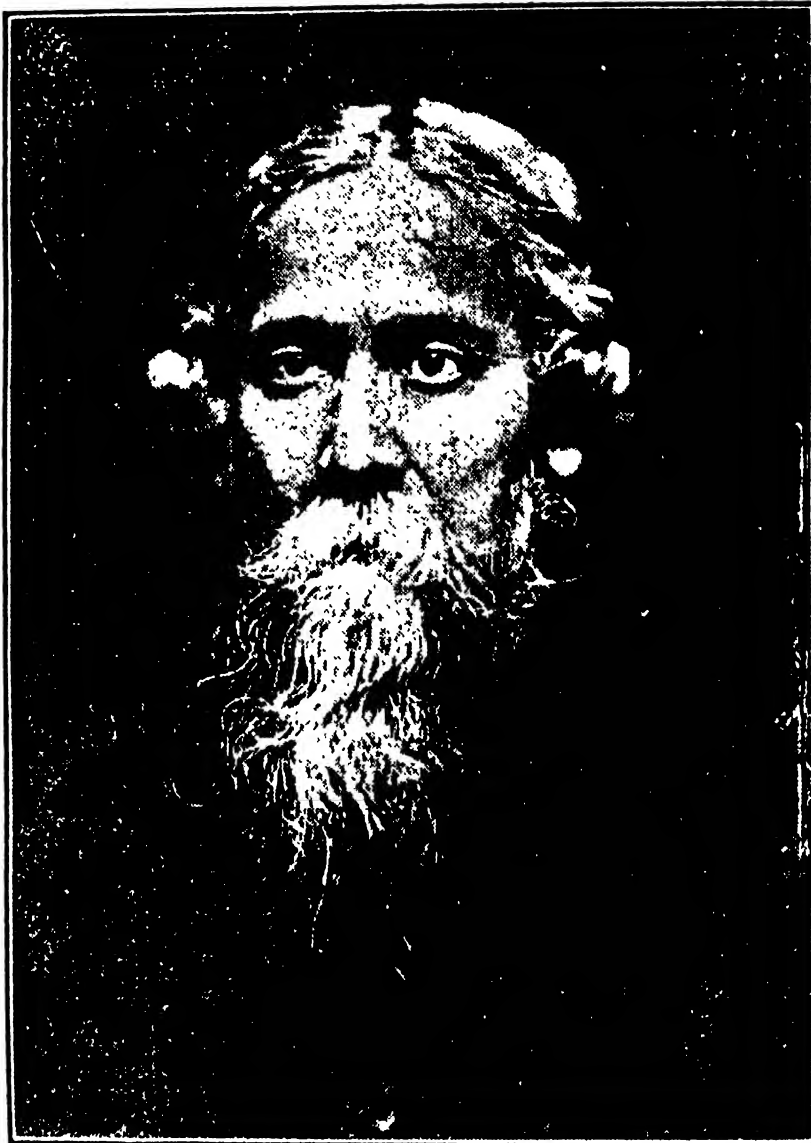


Photo by]

[L. Cassall Smith, 309, Oxford Street, W.

**MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE,**

whose songs are sung from the West of India into Burmah, wherever Bengali is spoken,  
by travellers, boatmen, and wayside loiterers.

**Fig. 2 The Christian Commonwealth**  
May 21, 1913 p 582

ing of young men to preach the Brahmo religion. I learned that the poet's grandfather was an extremely wealthy man, but died involved in debt, leaving only a portion of his estate on trust for his children. The sons, however, made over the trust to the creditors of their father's estate, and the poet's father has left on record his intense religious joy in making this renunciation. He wrote his autobiography a few years before his death, in 1905, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. The book is a wonderful record of the spiritual struggles of a great soul, and helps in no small degree to explain the spiritual history of his famous son. An English translation, valuable for the light it throws upon the foundation and growth of the Brahmo Samaj, was published in Calcutta in 1908, and is still to be bought in this country (Lusac, 3s. 6d.). When we talked together Mr. Tagore gave me many details of his father's connection with Brahmo Samaj, of the rise of the three sections into which the significant religious movement is divided, and of the part his father played in shaping the Brahmo teaching and practice.

### **The Personality of The Poet**

is strangely fascinating, with a hint of remoteness and aloofness that invests him with an unconscious authority. His lithe, graceful figure and luminous eyes, and the visible peace that rests upon his finely moulded face, have a quality of gentleness and charm that shames our noisy, clumsy Western ways and manners. One feels too heavily shod, too loud of speech, not fine enough in texture beside this gliding figure subdued to perfect balance, mentally, emotionally, and physically, by years of mystical contemplation and development of interior resources. He talks in a soft, rapid treble slightly tremulous, but vibrant like a reed-pipe, and with the same stirring sweetness.

From my conversation with Mr. Tagore, and the supplementary information gleaned from my courteous Indian friend, I gathered that the poet's life has been singularly like his father's in an interior spiritual development, reflected in the poetry which English readers have only just discovered. The little volume of prose translations from the original Bengali published recently by Messrs. Macmillan ("Gitanjali" or "Song-

Offerings", 4s. 6d.) has been received with wondering joy by lovers of beautiful writing. Mr. W. B. Yeats writes a glowing appreciation of the poems, but, indeed, they need no commendation even from a brother poet, they are so transparently startlingly the product of genius that one cannot withhold homage. Few writers in English have achieved such perfect mastery of the rhythm and colour of words, or have succeeded so well in rendering the faint, far-off fragrance, the dream-like beauty and delicacy of what one feels to be the loftiest mysticism.

### **The Poet's Achievement**

is certainly all the more wonderful because English is an alien tongue to Mr. Tagore. He told me he had never formally studied it. "I did not have much college training", he said, with charming deprecation, "because, I had a violent distaste for school, and after a time my elders gave me up in despair I would not do any of my lessons and exercises, and my relatives thought I was hopeless. So they let me go my own way and expected nothing from me. I ran wild all through my childhood. But I formed the habit of reading when I was very young. I used to read before I could understand what the books were about! The words used to sing to me. There were a great many Sanscrit books in my father's library, and from these I would read, though, of course, I could not understand them. The rhythm of the Sanscrit verses enchanted me. When in my youth I first came to England I read your great poets in the same way. Tennyson and Shelley were the same to me as the old Sanscrit poetry. I read them with only the very vaguest idea of their meaning. I had a dictionary beside me when I read them, but it was not the meaning that charmed me so much as the swing and rhythm and the metre. I stayed with the English people who let me read aloud every evening to them, a different book for each night, Dickens and Thackeray and the poets. In that way perhaps I learned your language better for my purpose than if I had studied its grammar".

"And when did you begin writing, Mr. Tagore?"

"When I was very young. My eldest brother used to edit a magazine, and that gave me an opportunity. I wrote both prose and poetry, but the latter

always seemed the natural thing to do. After I learned Sanscrit and English I did much translating into Bengali, and wrote novels and plays also." These facts, by the way, my Indian informant expanded into a record of

### **Remarkable Literary Activity**

Mr Tagore's first novel was written when he was nineteen; and he was already famous then. Some of his plays, one of which Mr. Tagore read the other day to a gathering of Indian students and their friends at the house in Cromwell Road, which the India Office has taken for a social centre of the Indian community in London, which he has himself set to music, are sung wherever Bengali is spoken.

For some years the poet has devoted himself to his school, described to me as a sort of nature monastery. Mr. Tagore explained that he "started a boarding school". But it appears to be a school-boy's paradise. "My father built a small house a few hours' journey away from the city", he said, "on a wide, bare heath, where there are only two very old trees standing. Under these trees he built a stone seat, and spent his days in meditation. I started my school there. It is a new experiment, because we have no-such boarding schools in Bengal; parents do not like to send away their children. Most of the boys who came to me at first were supposed to be unmanageable; my school was regarded as a sort of penal settlement for them! But I found that somehow the old associations of the place and the freedom they enjoyed changed the boys marvelously in a very short time. The training is on spiritual lines. I do not believe in violent methods, and the boys do pretty much as they like; they climb the trees and run about the garden, their classes are held out in the open air, and the teachers live with them as friends. My system? I have no system. I make the boys as happy as possible; that is my only method. They perform charades and plays, produce a school magazine, and I provide them with papers and magazines to read. The teaching in ordinary schools used to repel me, and I remember it in dealing with my boys. I make them happy." The repetition of the phrase seemed to supply the clue to

### **Mr. Tagore's Conception of Education**

He began, I learned, with five or six boys, and there are now nearly 200. He will not allow more than ten boys in a class, believing that a teacher cannot give proper attention to more. The teaching staff numbers twenty-two. The cost to the parents is not more than eighteen rupees a month, or a little more than £1 for each boy, which covers everything – boarding, tuition, medical attendance and laundry. The present Government is quite sympathetic to the institution, and Mr. Tagore spoke warmly in praise of the present Viceroy: "Lord Hardinge is much liked by all, and is very popular". And that Mr. Tagore is not an indiscriminating enthusiast for British rule was proved when he went on to speak of a private circular which was issued to the minor Government officials during the unrest in Bengal in a previous Lieutenant-Governor's period of government, warning them to withdraw their sons from his school. When Mr. Tagore realised what was happening, he told me, he made representations, with the help of an English missionary, to Lord Hardinge, who had just then arrived in India, and the circular was withdrawn by Lord Carmichael, the present Governor of Bengal. The extent of the unrest was not at any time realised here at home, I gathered from Mr. Tagore's references; one of the most trying experiences of the educated Indians during that time was the unpleasant scrutiny which all their acts and words received from Government spies. But the irritation has now almost disappeared.

I asked the poet what he thought of the reception given to his translations by the English public. "My

### **Pleasure and Surprise**

are almost equal", he replied. "I was not at all sure about the impression my book would make. I began to make the translations just when I was recovering from illness, and had no strength to do any original work. They began as a kind of experiment, but I found that I had the same experiences in translating the songs as I had when writing them first. Perhaps in that sense they may be regarded as original work; all the old inspiration came back to me as I experimented in this new tongue. And

my former reading of your great English poets probably helped me".

One can only faintly understand what the originals are like from the surpassing beauty of the translations. Mr. W. B. Yeats remarks that his Indian friends tell him that these lyrics are in the original full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacy of colour, of metrical invention: "The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of a common soil as the grass and the rushes". A "supreme culture" is the fitting phrase to apply to Mr. Tagore's wonderful grace and subtlety of mind. An infinitely lovely vision of the life from which these songs spring rises as one reads. A delicately posed strength and a gracious meekness go to their making, and an immense background and hinterland of thought, a sense of remote origins and of depth beyond depth of mystic vision relate the poems to the spiritual history of mankind which is the same in East and West.

What is the

### **Secret of the Divine Companionship**

which these songs reveal? The last poem but one in this volume shows that the poet has been often asked, as I asked him, "Who is he?"

'I put my tales of you into lasting songs The secret gushes out from my heart They come and ask me, 'Tell me all your meanings'. I know not how to answer them. I say, 'Ah, who knows what they mean!' They smile and go away in utter scorn. And you sit there smiling".

"It is very difficult to express one's deepest ideas and experiences, others will understand what you have seen and felt. It's especially difficult to those who have not gone through the same experiences. One can only just set them down I have no creed or doctrine or dogma or anything of that kind. I know nothing. I have made no study of philosophy. I was brought up in the atmosphere of religious mysticism. My father was a great admirer of the Upanishads and the Sufi mystics But I have no system. My mind is all free from dogma and doctrine, and my poems are, I suppose, not very clear to those who have definite creeds".

Even so, here is a wonderfully sweet and melodious voice from the ancient East, immeasurably tender and gentle, strangely unfamiliar yet intimate and human and kindly. By virtue of our understanding of its message and in the measure of our sympathy with it we gain our right of entrance to the great fair of common human life.

21 May, 1913

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p6c6(D)

### **THE ABBEY THEATRE**

#### **A PLAY BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

After many gray performances we have just had a production at the Abbey Theatre that had some colour and adventure. The production included "The Post Office", by Rabindranath Tagore, and a play in Irish by Mr. Padraic Pearse, "An Ri". "An Ri" was played by the students of St. Edna's College, and "The Post Office" by the Abbey Theatre second company. The two plays were parallel. Like Tagore, Mr. Pearse is an exponent of national culture. He has founded St. Edna's, a bilingual college that is the Irish equivalent of Tagore's school in Bengal. Mr. Pearse's play was originally written for the open air, and it still bears a great deal of pageantry. It has the disadvantage that its real action — a battle — takes place off the stage. The scene is laid before a monastery; a battle has been fought and the King has been defeated. And always the people whom he leads will be defeated, for he is sinful, having spoiled the churches and oppressed the poor. Only when one who is innocent leads the people to battle will invaders be defeated. A monk indicates that only a child can fulfil the King's task. He asks which one amongst them is the most innocent. They name a boy. When he hears that the people will be victorious and that he will be slain he asks to be let go into the battle. The King's robe and sword and shield are given him and he goes with men. Afterwards he is brought back dead. The boy who took the part had the eagerness and tremor of a child undertaking an adventure, and an heroic spirit came through the play.

Like "Hannele" and "The Death of Tintalgiles", "The Post Office" is about death and a child, but there is nothing of dread, nothing of harshness in it; instead of the gloom of a castle or the drabness of a night shelter we have the sunshine of India. The whole play leaves the impression of something gracious and adventurous. Amal, a child, is sick, and is not let leave the house of Madhav, his adopted father. So he sits at the window and talks to all whom he can win over him. He doesn't want to be a learned man. He wants to go off and look for work and pass the high hills. He calls to the curd-seller and talks to him about his distant village. The watchman with his gong comes along, and Amal talks to him about Time - Where does Time go to. The child would like to go as far. The watchman talks to him about the new building with the golden flag that is being built. It is the King's Post Office. Amal thinks that he would like to be a letter-carrier for the King. Then Sudha, the flower-seller, passes, and she promises to bring him a flower. The children play outside the window, and Amal tells them to bring the letter-carrier to see him, so that if the King did send him a letter they should know where to bring it. The pompous headman comes then, and in ridicule tells the child that the King is sending him a letter. The second scene is within the house. The fakir is telling him of his adventures on the Island of Parrots, but Amal is not so eager to go there, for he is thinking of the letter-carrier going on his journeys. The physician who comes in has little hope for Amal. Then the headman, to keep up the mockery, hands him a paper that he says the King has sent him. The fakir takes up the sheet and declares that the King says he is coming to visit Amal. Surely enough, two great personages enter; they are the King's Herald and the King's Physician, and they confound the headman by saying that the King is actually coming to visit the child. The lamp is extinguished, so that Amal may see the stars. The flower-gul gives him a blossom, and the scene closes. The King who visits the boy is Death.

We do not know if Tagore wrote "Post Office" as a play in a single scene. The whole action could take place in the house. But it was a good piece of stage management to divide it into an outdoor and an indoor scene. Both were composed of Gordon Craig screens, and the costumes and lightings were very effective. The part of Amal was taken by Miss

Lilian Jago. Some time ago she gave a good performance of Hannele in Hauptmann's play. As Amal she was rather feminine and rather grown-up, but she had an eagerness and wistfulness that made the part live. "The Post Office" is a beautiful and moving play. It seems to have technical flaws, the dialogue becomes garrulous in places, and a few decisive things do not get their due emphasis. It is not clear that the headman wishes to humble the boy for his presumption in speaking of the King, nor is it clear that the play is ended before the curtain falls. But such failures may be due to an alien production.

Padraic Colum

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21 May, 1913

**THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**

p5c4-5(DE)

## **INDIAN DRAMA**

### **THE KEY TO THE SENTIMENTS OF THE NATION**

**BY HARENDRA N. MAITRA**

Since the visit of King George V to India there has been quite a rapid growth of Indian dramas in England. It is, of course, needless to dwell upon the importance of the stage as an index to the intellectual and social life of a people, and in view of the naturally growing interest of every cultured European in the India of the past and of the present, Indian drama cannot but appeal to the appreciative instincts of the British public.

Remarkable is the fact that the ancient Hindus who had built up a system of science and philosophy, of logic and language-building, of social and political organisation, had also developed a dramatic literature, and organised a stage even at a time while the civilisation of other nations was in its infancy. Centuries before the artistic Greek had come to think of a stage the Hindu had a fairly well-known dramatic art, which culminated in the work of such masters as Kalidasa - very rightly styled the Shakespeare of India.

The relations of the two countries accidentally linked together ought to be rightly understood, and this understanding could not be brought about more certainly than by the introduction to English audiences of Indian dramas portraying the life and culture of a nation which is historically so important and philosophically so sublime. Enthusiastically possessed by the significance of this sentiment, a group of workers, headed by Mr. K. N. Dasgupta, staged "Budha", of the dramatised version of "The Light of Asia", in February 1912 at the Royal Court Theatre, London. Before that attempts had also been made to produce Indian plays in England. Mention could be made of "Sakuntala", or "The Lost Ring" of Kalidasa so early as 1898 at the Botanical Gardens, as an outdoor representation, by Mr. William Poel. The same play was again produced at the Albert Hall Theatre. The production of "Budha", by Mr. William Poel, was a great success. Some enthusiastic Indian ladies, headed by Mrs. P. L. Roy, with the co-operation of the Countess of Minto, organised the tableaux vivants of Kalidasa's "Kumar Sambham", or the "Birth Romance of the War God", but the wave of Indian drama did not stop there. Some representatives of Indian students produce, at the then Whitney Theatre, Strand, the heroic romance of "Ayesha", a dramatised version of "Durgeshnandini", by Sir Bankim Chandra, fitly called the Sir Walter Scott of Bengal, and writer of the inspired all-India national song "Bandymatarani". Then, under the inspiration of Bengal's poet, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, there was staged at the Albert Hall Theatre in July last a beautiful English adaption - "The Maharani of Arakan" - with all the colour of Burmese life. In appreciation of this piece it has been justly said: Those who look below the surface may find an allegory bearing on the relations of English men and Indians in search for a permanent reconciliation, the evil of hostile sentiments being healed only when the parties meet on the common ground of simple humanity. Mr. K. N. Dasgupta, the organiser of the Indian Art, Dramatic, and Friendly Society, the main object of which is "to bring the East and the West into closer touch of amity and mutual understanding," is to be congratulated upon his production of "Ratnavali; or The Pearl Necklace", at the Cosmopolis Theatre last night. This Indian drama was written about 1,200 years ago. "It is

remarkable as being a link between the old and the new school of Indian drama, and one which will show that the stately Indian of the past was capable of the intensest comedy in the most sparkling wit."

To bring India before the British public is the desire of all right-thinking people. England is proud of India, the home of "Kohinoor". She would be prouder still if she could understand the spirit of Indian drama; for this is the real key to the sentiments of the nation.

24 May, 1913

### THE INQUIRER

p325-326(W)

#### Section : MEETINGS AND GENERAL NEWS

#### MR. TAGORE ON "THE SEARCH FOR GOD"

In the beautiful translation of his poems, "Gitanjali", which Mr. Rabindranath Tagore has recently prepared for English readers, another link has been forged in the chain that will one day draw East and West together, reconciling their diverse aims and justifying the hopes of those who believe in the ultimate unity of mankind. The link is a strong one

stronger than it would have been if he had only given us the mystical self-communings of an ascetic utterances detached from the things of earth, for he combines the wisdom and serenity of a sage with the passionate love of living beauty which characterises the poet, and he is never so full of adoration of the divine as when he is most conscious of the loveliness of earth. This makes his message acceptable to many whom the transcendental utterances of Indian philosophers often perplex if they do not alienate, and renders the pathway that leads from practical affairs to the intimate things of the spirit a little less perilous for those to tread who are not accustomed to it. And yet Mr. Tagore makes no concession to the spirit of the age as we of the West interpret it; he is not, he cannot be, in sympathy with the materialism of

modern civilisation; but he understands it as many of the prophets and seers of his own country do not, and he appraises as true worth the vital energy and constructive power which has made us a mighty nation, and which will lead us to greater heights still if we do not pour it into shallow channels, and forget the things that are of real value for the soul in the pursuit of wealth and racial supremacy.

The civilisation of ancient Greece, he told us in his lecture on "The Relation of the Individual and the Universe" at Caxton Hall on Monday (the first of a series of lectures which he is giving under the auspices of the Quest Society during his stay in England), was centred within city walls, and in effect all modern civilisations have their cradles of bricks and mortar. These have left their mark deep in the minds of men, and set up a principle of division and separation which begets in us the habit of securing our conquests by fortifying them and shutting them off from one another. We divide nation from nation, man from man, and man from nature, and this breeds in us a strong suspicion of all that is beyond the barriers we have built so that everything from without has to fight hard for recognition and acceptance.

Here it is that India can help us, for *her* civilisation was cradled in the ancient forests where she learnt to identify her life with the whole universe and the spirit which breathes through it. When the first invaders appeared in India it was a vast land of forests, and the new-comers rapidly took advantage of the covert these afforded from the raging storms and tropical sun. Here the different Aryan clans, settling in favoured spots where food and water were plentiful, made their homes and lit their sacrificial fires, and it was this that gave the civilisation of India its distinct character so different from that of European nations. She was surrounded by the vast life of nature, was fed and clothed by her, and was in constant intercourse with her in all her varying aspects. Such a life, generally speaking, has the effect of dulling the human intelligence and lowering the standards of life; we find, however, that these circumstances did not enfeeble the energies of man's mind in India, but only gave them a particular direction. Having been in unceasing contact with the life of nature he was free from the desire to resist its domination and shut himself away

from its influence by building boundary walls. His aim was not to acquire, but to realise his identity with the universe by growing with and into his surroundings. He felt that truth is all-comprehensive, that there is no such thing as absolute isolation, and that the only way of attaining truth is by the interpenetration of man's spirit with the spirit of the universe. Later there came a time when the primeval forests gave way to cultivated cities having communication with the world's great centres, but even in the hey-day of her prosperity the heart of India still looked back with adoration to the ideals of her early life, and drew her best inspiration from them.

The West seems to take pride in thinking (Mr. Tagore continued) that it is subduing nature, as if we were living in a hostile world where we have to wrest everything we want from an unwilling and opposing force. This sentiment is the product of the city-wall training of the mind, for the city dweller naturally concentrates his mental vision upon his own life and work, and this divides him from her in whose bosom he lies. With ancient India the point of view was different. She felt that we can have no communication whatever with our surroundings if they are foreign to us. Man's complaint against nature is that he has to acquire most of the necessities of life by his own force; yes, but his efforts are not in vain. He is reaping success every day, and this shows that there is a rational connection between himself and nature. We can look upon a road from two different points of view - as something that divides us from the object of our desire, so that every step we take along it is achieved in the face of obstruction; or as something that leads us to our goal, so that as we tread we gain at every step, a benefit that is offered to us. This is the attitude of India in regard to the world which surrounds us. She believes that we are in harmony with it, and that man can only use its forces because he is himself one with those forces. She has no hesitation in acknowledging her unbroken relations and kinship with all that lives.

This idea of fundamental union is not merely a philosophical speculation; it finds its realisation in feeling and action, the consciousness being cultivated by meditation and service in such a manner that earth and light, flower and fruit become more than merely physical phenomena to be used or

thrown aside, and are as necessary to the ideal of perfection as each single note is necessary to the completeness of the symphony. The curious man of science can never understand what it is that the man with the spiritual vision finds in his communion with nature: how that water does not merely cleanse his limbs but purifies his soul; the earth does not merely sustain his body, but gladdens his mind by contact with a living presence. Those who do not realise this live in a prison-house of matter, in a world full of forces that are alien to them. We, in India, try to realise the essential unity of the world with the conscious soul of man, and to perceive this unity held together by the one eternal spirit whose power creates the sun and the stars and enlightens the understanding. It is not true that we ignore the differences of value between one thing and another. The sense of the superiority of man in the scale of being is not absent from the mind, but this superiority consists, not in the power of possession, but in the power of union. That is why a whole people who were once meat-eaters gave up meat-eating, an event unique in the history of mankind, to show its sense of the unity between all living things. India knew that when we cut ourselves off from the life of the universe and are sufficient unto ourselves, we are creating bewildering problems which we have lost the power to solve. Man seems to be trying to walk the single rope of humanity, which means either a great strain to keep himself erect, or a fall. He is ceaselessly exerting every nerve and muscle in order to maintain his balance at each step, and then, in his weariness, he fulminates against providence and thinks that he has been unfairly dealt with in the scheme of things. *This must not go on for ever. He must realise the wholeness of his existence, without which his poverty loses its simplicity and becomes squalid and shame-faced, his appetites do not minister to his life, keeping to the limit of their purposes, but become an end in themselves. Then he strives to startle, not to attract, and cultivates what is abnormal and sensational in art and literature.*

Mr. Tagore drew an interesting parallel between America and India, which received their civilisation from the same source, the primeval forests where early settlers dwelt. In the case of America, however, the struggle between man and nature had never ceased, and although the settler may have admired

the beauty of the forests, these great cathedrals of nature had no deeper significance for him. He made them productive of wealth, but they did not minister to his spiritual needs. In India it was very different, for there the forests were the sanctuaries of sages. He did not wish for a moment to suggest that things should have been otherwise. It would be an utter waste of opportunities if history repeated herself exactly in the same manner in every place, and it was best for the commerce of the spirit that people differently situated should bring their different products into the market of humanity, each of which is necessary and complementary to the other. But from the first India has been surrounded by circumstances which gave her activity a different direction from that of the West, with its ceaseless striving for domination, its rapid advance in invention and organisation, its stupendous armaments and its passion for efficiency and supremacy. The aim of India has not been to gain power, and the spiritual ideal she endeavoured to realise had cost her dear in the way of worldly success, but it was a supreme manifestation of man's highest powers which know no limits. Greater than kings and emperors and statesmen were the Rishis who had attained the freedom and peace of the soul, and were in perfect harmony with the inner self. These men were described in the Upanishads as being at one with God and nature. They had ceased to desire the things of this world for themselves, realising that a man's possessions are his limitations, a truth which Jesus expressed when he said, "It is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." They did not regard Brahma as a metaphysical abstraction, but as the world-conscious spirit interpenetrating all, and their attitude towards the spirit of the universe was one of deep adoration and ecstasy of joy. "I bow to God over and over again, who is in fire and in water and permeates the whole world, who is in the annual crops as well as in the perennial trees." He is the one living truth who makes all realities true. "Listen to me, ye sons of the immortal spirit. I have known the supreme Presence whose light shines forth from beyond the darkness."

There is not the least trace of vagueness and passivity in this. Buddha, who developed the practical side of the Upanishads, preached the same

message, the consciousness, at every moment of existence, sleeping or waking, of living and having the joy of being in the spirit of Brahma, who is within our own soul. But we have to pay a great price for this cosmic consciousness: we have to be prepared to *give ourselves*. In the Bhagavad Gita we are urged to work disinterestedly, and not to strive for results. This is often said to lead to unreality, but the reverse is the truth. The man who works only for himself under-rates everything else; therefore, in order to apprehend and enter into the beauty and reality of the whole we must be free from personal desires. Every expansion of the consciousness must be obtained at the cost of giving up all that limits and hinders it. To know God in this way is to have true life, not to know him is isolation and death, and he is only to be thus known when we realise him in each and all. This is no anthropomorphic hallucination, nor the mere play of imagination, but the liberation of the soul which can only develop by denying itself of its unity with all humanity. This Rishis did not recognise any essential difference between life and death, but saluted both with the same serenity. They knew that mere appearance and disappearance are like the waves of the sea, but life itself is permanent and knows no dissolution. The ideal is the noble heritage of our forefathers waiting to be claimed by us. It is not merely intellectual and emotional but it has an ethical basis, and it must be translated into action. "The Supreme Being," said the Upanishad, "is all-pervading, therefore he is the innate good in all." To be truly united in love and service with all beings and thus to realise oneself in all is the essence of goodness, and this is the teaching of the Upanishads.

28 May, 1913

### THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

p599(W)

#### MR TAGORE AT OXFORD

##### "REALISATION IN LOVE"

The widespread interest aroused by the knowledge of Mr. Tagore's advertised visit to Manchester

College, Oxford on Friday, May 23, was considerably heightened by the excellent interview and fine photograph in the last issue of the CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH.

Nor were the expectations of the large audience disappointed. At the close of Mr. Tagore's address on "Realisation in Love", one felt that the whole problem of modern social life had been lifted on to a plane higher than is usual, and had been dealt with in a most moving spirit of mystic insight. One saw at last the thinness of the modern money-mad, and money-making, civilisation in the piercing light of Tagore's gospel of the radiant joy of life and the wonderful unity between mankind and the universe. In words that reminded one forcibly of Prof. Royce's highest expressions of "Loyalty to the Community", or, again, of Bosanquet's plea for "greater self," Tagore told his audience that sin was an attitude of life that regarded its goal as finite, and its own little self as its chief aim and object of affection. The utter failure of all civilisations that look on man as a machine and not as a spirit was certain. No civilisation could long sustain itself by "cannibalism" of any sort, physical, mental or spiritual. If one suffered then all must suffer, if one part of the community lived at the expense of the other part, the whole community was in peril. All separateness, all selfish exclusiveness, is doomed to die; it can never be made external. But the spirit that becomes one with the whole, and in harmony with the laws of the whole, *that* spirit cannot die. Through love, and through love alone, can this harmony be won: love that must be one and yet two at the same time, the loved and the lover, but even so never separated into antagonism. Love, and love alone, can put its credit and its debit accounts in the same column. Because of the great love of God, did he limit himself in his creation, that he might the more show his love: God had bound himself to man in the unbreakable tie of creation, and that was the greatest glory of humanity. That was fault of our modern life and the cause of its problems was the lack of this spirit of love. Our prison systems, or treatment of subject races, our whole social evils of every type were due to this refusal to look upon man as a living spirit whose loyalty could never be gained by compulsion, but could only be won by love.

As in his poems, so in his address, Mr. Tagore's illustrations were delightfully appropriate; and yet he was never afraid of using quite modern forms of life to illustrate his meaning.

Herein lies his power: his wonderful ability to unite East and West, the mystic and the modern, without either the depth or the beauty of his teaching suffering one with thereby. One looks forward with much eagerness to the publication of this and other addresses in book in the near future.

W. HARRIS CROOK.

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30 May, 1913

**THE TIMES**

p11c1(D)

#### **Section : "COURT CIRCULAR"**

A reception to Srijut Rabindra Nath Tagore, the Indian poet, dramatist, musician, and educationist, by the Indian students in the United Kingdom will be held at the Criterion Restaurant on Saturday, June 14, at 4 o'clock. Tickets may be obtained from Dr. J. N. Mehta, London Hospital, E.

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31 May, 1913

**THE INQUIRER**

p344-346(W)

#### **Section : MEETINGS AND GENERAL NEWS**

##### **MR. TAGORE ON "SOUL CONSCIOUSNESS"**

In his second lecture given under the auspices of the Quest Society, at Caxton Hall on Monday, Mr. Tagore spoke on the subject of "Soul-consciousness" to a deeply attentive and crowded audience. We have seen, he said, that it was the aspiration of ancient India to live and have its perfect joy in Brahma, the all-conscious and all-pervading spirit, by tending its field of consciousness over the whole world. It may be urged that this is an impossibility for finite man, and that by

trying to realise all we may end in realising nothing; but it is not so absurd as it seems. Man has his problems to solve everyday; his burdens are too numerous for him to carry unaided, but he knows that by adopting a system he can lighten their weight, and if things go wrong and he can find no way out of his difficulties, it is clear that he has not yet lighted upon the right method of harmonising all the heterogeneous elements of his life and thought so as to ensure unity of purpose and achievement. He knows that unity is strength because unity is truth. When we say knowledge is power we mean truth is power, and truth is the unity which comprehends multiplicity. Facts are many, but truth is one. The former are like blind lanes which lead nowhere; the latter opens out the whole region of the infinite, and sheds its light like a lamp in places where we did not think its rays could reach. Truth, indeed, while occupied with facts, is not a mere aggregate of facts, but transcends them on every side, and points to the one reality comprehending all.

In spiritual things, as in knowledge, man must clearly recognise some central truth that will give him access to the widest possible field of thought, and that is the object which the Upanishad has in view when it says "know thine own self," or, in other words, realise one great principle of unity hidden in every man. Soul-consciousness is the perception of the inner being that transcends our ego and has its deep affinity with God. Children when they begin to learn each separate letter of the alphabet find no pleasure in it because they miss the purpose for which it exists. These letters become a source of joy for us only when they are combined into words and sentences and convey an idea. So when the soul is imprisoned within the narrow limits of the separate self, it has no clue to the meaning of life, and it is only when it cooperates with others and loses itself in the larger life of the whole that it learns the secret of its existence. Man was troubled and lived in a state of fear so long as he was ignorant of the uniformity of law in nature, and the world was alien to him. But when the individual finds himself in his surroundings and knows that neither they nor the law which shaped them is alien to him, he has discovered the bond of union which relates him to all things, and the knowledge brings him exceeding joy. This joy, however,

is partial until it includes love, which obliterates the sense of difference, and leads the human soul to fulfil itself completely, and to reach out to the infinite

Love is the highest bliss that man can attain to, for through it he knows himself a part of the One, and it is this which is for ever establishing relations between human beings through the medium of art, literature, religion, social activities and national institutions. To love in the highest sense is to die to the personal self and live in the larger self, and those who give themselves for the sake of mankind are living the life of the soul, and proving to us the ultimate truth of humanity. We call them the men of the Great Soul. It is said in the the Upanishad, "It is not that thou lovest thy son because thou desirest him, but thou lovest thy son because thou desirest thine own soul."

Whomsoever we love in him we find our soul in the truest sense, and our happiness comes from the extension of our consciousness and capacity for self-realisation. It is a commonplace fact that the joys and sorrows of our loved ones are our own joys and sorrows. Through sharing them we have grown larger, we have apprehended that great truth which transcends the universe. In some respects our love for our children, for our family may limit other relationships and prevent the extension of consciousness in certain directions. It may even become a narrow, exclusive thing, and fail ultimately to fulfil its purpose like a light placed in a sealed enclosure; but it is the *first step*, and all the wonder lies in that first step. From it we learn that our highest joy is in losing our egotistic self by sacrificing it for the welfare of others.

To realise the soul apart from the self is, then, the first step towards the supreme deliverance. We must know with absolute certainty that we are one with the whole, and we shall attain this knowledge only by overcoming our pride and vanity, our insatiable greed and love of possession, and learning the law of disinterested service and renunciation. The self as we know it is an illusion, without permanence, and no more to be identified with the real self than the shell which held the chick so long, but which was not really a part of its life. That shell, however perfect it may be, has no growth or vitality, and it must be burst through in order that the freedom of light and air natural to the bird may be

won. In Sanskrit the bird has been called the "twice-born" so also is called the man who has been trained by spiritual discipline and contemplation for not less than twelve years, and has come out, pure in heart, and with controlled and tranquil mind, to take up the responsibilities of life in a spirit of detachment which permits him to give all his energies to his work without being troubled by fears as to personal results. He has entered into living relationship with all around him, he is free from the domination of self, he finds the ultimate truth of existence in his own soul, and comes into immediate contact with the Supreme Soul on all sides. This is what is meant by losing the world and gaining one's soul and when Jesus said "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth" he proclaimed the truth that when everything is abandoned the whole is gained, that when a man gets rid of the pride of self he comes into his true inheritance and possesses all. Pride of self interferes with the proper function of the soul, which can only realise itself by its union with the universe and the universal law. Buddha is said to have preached a negative gospel of inaction, and the ultimate extinction of personality. It was true that he denounced activities, but only the activities which proceeded from the love of pleasure, vanity, and the desire for wealth and dominion, which keep the soul imprisoned in material things. It was true that he preached extinction, but only the extinction of all that proceeded from pride, and ignorance and earthly ambition, not the extinction of truth, charity, and love. Buddha preached deliverance from the errors that darken our consciousness and tend to limit it within the boundaries of the personal self, so that as when a man sleeps he lives, but knows not the varied relations of his life to his surroundings, the soul living the life of illusion is spiritually asleep, and knows not the highest reality.

Once Mr. Tagore met two ascetics belonging to a certain religious sect in a village of Bengal, and to them he put this question: "Can you tell me wherein lies the special truth of your religion?" One of them said "It is difficult to define that." The other said, "No, it is quite simple. We hold that we have first of all to know our own soul under the guidance of our own teacher, and when we have done that we can find Him who is the Supreme Teacher of our Souls." "Why do you not teach everybody that?" "Whoever wishes to receive the

truth will come and hear it," was the reply. "But are they coming?" He smiled, and then said, "They *must* come, one and all." Yes, the illiterate ascetic of rural Bengal was right. Man is out to find himself; his history is the history of a long journey through the unknown in quest of his own soul. Through the rise and fall of empires and dynasties, through the creation of innumerable symbols giving shape to his dreams and aspirations and the casting of them away like playthings belonging to infancy, through the forging of magic keys to unlock the mysteries, and the casting away of these also when they became useless, man has marched from epoch to epoch, seeking the fullest realisation of his soul, whose inward course is never checked by death or dissolution. His mistakes have been by no means few, they have strewn his path with ruins. His miseries have been many, his sufferings like the pangs that precede birth. He has gone through, and is still going through, cruel martyrdoms, and the institutions he has built are the altars whereto he brings his daily sacrifices. All this would be absolutely meaningless and unbearable if he had not felt through everything the deepest joy of the hidden soul, which tests its strength and achieves its growth by pain and renunciation. Yes, they are coming, the myriads of men, approaching nearer and nearer to the one great truth which is all-comprehensive. Man's wants are endless till he becomes conscious of his soul, his world is in a state of continual flux. But when he has realised his soul, there is the determinative centre around which everything gathers; to him the day and night bring only joy; the air vibrates with music and the sky radiates beauty, and he has found the key to the heavenly life.

The soul cannot attain this tranquility and joy by means of the understanding alone, but by immediate intuition. It could never have reached its goal by the devious path of knowledge if it had had no flashes of inner light to guide it. We can only know the One as heart of our hearts, and soul of our souls - in the joy that we feel when we give up self and stand face to face with Him. When we find our soul we find everything else. Therefore we pray, "O thou self-revealing One, reveal thyself in me." "From unreality lead me to the real, from darkness to the light, from death to immortality." Infinite is the distance that lies between truth and

untruth, between death and deathlessness, yet this gulf is bridged in a moment when the Eternal Spirit shows himself. Man, in his sin, takes part with the finite against the infinite, but it is a losing game. We lust after pleasures because our passions make them seem desirable; we long for things because our greed exaggerates them and makes them appear good. This falsification of things breaks the harmony of life at each step, and we are distracted and restless. But even in our pleasures we are finding ourselves, and we shall learn at last that righteousness is the divine food of the soul. As it is said, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The longing for the deeper manifestation of himself is greater than a man's desire for pleasure, but God has left his will free and within his soul he is lord. There our God must win his entrance. There he comes as a guest and not as a king, and he cannot come until he is invited. God never forces doors if they are shut against Him, for we have to realise His union of love, not His dominion of power. In India he who truly lives in communication with the divine receives such homage as would be considered almost sacrilegious in the West. We see in him God's will revealed, and God's perfect joy fully manifested in humanity. His life, burning with God's love, makes all our earthly love resplendent, all our earthly experiences of joy and pleasure group themselves around the spiritual truth he reveals; the trees and the stars and the blue hills appear to us as symbols full of meanings that can never be uttered. We seem to see God making a new world when a man's soul is face to face with the Eternal Lover.

3 June, 1913

THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE  
p12C1-2(11)

### THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

#### MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S THIRD LECTURE

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore delivered his third lecture on "The Search for God" at Caxton Hall last night.

The subject he dealt with was "The Problem of Evil", and in the course of his remarks he said:

"The question why is there evil in existence is the same as why is there imperfection, or, in other words, why is there creation at all. We must take it for granted that it could not be otherwise, that creation must be imperfect, must be gradual, and that it is futile to ask the question why we are. But the real question is, is this imperfection the final truth, is evil absolute and ultimate? The current of the world has its boundaries, otherwise it could have no existence, but its meaning is not in its boundaries, which are fixed, but in its movement, which is towards perfection. The wonder is not that there should be obstacles and suffering in this world, but that there should be law and order, beauty and joy, goodness and love. The idea of God that man has in his being is the wonder of all wonders. He has felt in the depth of his life that what appears as imperfect is the manifestation of the perfect; just as a man who has an ear for music realises the perfection of a song while in fact he is only listening to a succession of notes. Man has found out the great paradox that what is limited is not imprisoned within its limits, it is ever moving, and therewith shedding its finitude every moment. Pain, which is the feeling connected with our finiteness, is not a fixture in our life. It is not an end in itself as joy is. To meet it is to know that it cannot be the principle of permanence in the creation. It is like what error is in our intellectual life. To read the history of the development of science is to go through the maze of mistakes it made current at different times. Yet no one really believes that science is the most perfect system of disseminating mistakes. The principle of the ascertainment of truth is the important thing to dwell on in the history of science, not its innumerable mistakes.

"As in intellectual error so in evil in any other form, its essence is impermanence, for it cannot fit in with the whole. Every moment it is being corrected by the totality of things, and is changing its aspects. We exaggerate its importance by imagining it as at a standstill. But evil is ever moving, so will all its incalculable immensity it does not effectually clog the current of our life, and on the whole the earth, water, and air remain sweet and pure for living beings. All statistics consist of our deliberate

attempts to represent statically what is in motion, so by this process things assume a weight in our mind which they have not in reality.

"If we kept the flashlight of our observation turned upon the fact of death the world would appear to us like a huge charnel-house; but it is surprisingly to think that in the world of life the thought of death has the least hold upon our minds. Not because it is the least apparent, but because it is the negative aspect of life; life as a whole never takes death seriously. Only when we detach one individual fact of death do we see merely the blankness, and are dismayed. We lose sight of the wholeness of the life whose part is death."

Like the accidents in a child's attempts to walk, we meet with sufferings in various forms in our life every day, showing the imperfections in our knowledge, power, and application of will. But if these only revealed our weakness to us we should die of utter depression, but our life instinctively takes a wider view, it has an ideal of perfection which ever carries it beyond its present limitations. Within us, we have a hope which always walks in front of our present narrow experience. It is the undying faith of the infinite in us which dares to assert that man has oneness with God. Consciously or unconsciously we have in our life this feeling of Truth which is ever more than its appearance, for our life is facing the infinite, and is on the move. Therefore its aspiration is infinitely more than its achievements. Therefore evil cannot altogether stop the course of life on the highway and rob it of its possessions. For the evil has to pass on, it has to grow into good. If the least evil could stop anywhere indefinitely, it would sink deep and eat into the marrow of existence. As it is, man does not really believe in evil, but our life itself is optimistic, it wants to go on, and we have a faith which no individual instances to the contrary can shake that the direction of humanity is from evil to good.

"The question will be asked, What is goodness, what does our moral nature mean? My answer to that is that when a man begins to have an extended vision of his self, when he realises that he is much more than what he is at present, he begins to become conscious of his moral nature. Necessarily,

his perspective of life changes, and his will takes the place of his wishes. For will is the wish of the larger life, the life whose greater portion is out of our present reach and most of whose objects are not before our sight. Then comes the conflict of our lesser man with our greater man, our wish with our will, the desire for things that are before our senses without purpose, which is within our heart. Then we begin with what we immediately desire and what is good. For good is that which is desirable for our greater self, and our moral faculty is the faculty by which we know that life is not made up of fragments, purposeless and discontinuous. This moral sense of man not only gives him the power to see that his self has a continuity in time, but it also enables him to see that he is not true when he is only restricted to his own self. As he has a feeling for his future self which is outside his present consciousness, so he has a feeling for his greater self which is outside the limits of his personality. To the man who lives for an idea, for his country, for the good of humanity, life has an extensive meaning, and to that extent pain becomes less important to him. Pleasure is for one's own self, but goodness is the happiness for all humanity and for all time. So, from the point of view of the good, pleasure and pain must appear in a different meaning; so much so that pleasure may be shunned and pain may be courted in its place, that death may be made welcome as giving a higher value to life. To live in perfect goodness is to realise one's life in the infinite, and when we attain to that universal life which is the moral life we become freed from bonds of pleasure and pain, and the place vacated by our self becomes filled with an unspeakable joy which springs from measureless love.

"Thus we see that man's individuality is not his highest truth; there is that in him which is universal, and man's deepest joy is in growing greater and greater by union with the all. This would be an impossibility if there were no law common to all, and so only by discovering the law and following it do we become great, do we realise the universal, while as long as our individual desires are at conflict with the universal law we suffer pain and are beaten. It is the same with our spiritual life — when the individual man in us chafes against the lawful rule of the universal man we become morally small and must suf-

fer. In such a condition our successes are our great failures, and the very fulfilment of our desires leaves us poorer. Man's freedom is never in being saved from troubles, but it is in the freedom to take trouble for his own good, to make the trouble an element in his joy. It can be made so only when we realise that in us we have the world-man who is immortal, who is not afraid of death and sufferings, and who looks upon pain as only the other side of joy. He who has realised this knows that it is pain which is our true wealth as imperfect beings, and has made us great and worthy to take the seat with the perfect. He knows that we are not beggars, that pain is the hard coin which must be paid for everything valuable in this life; for our power, our wisdom, our love, that in pain is symbolised the infinite possibility of perfection, the eternal unfolding of joy."

7 June, 1913

### THE INQUIRER

p362-363(W)

#### Section : MEETINGS AND GENERAL NEWS

#### MR. TAGORE ON "THE PROBLEM OF EVIL"

MR. TAGORE gave his third lecture at the Caxton Hall on Monday night, when he took for his subject "The Problem of Evil," and showed how that problem is to be approached from the point of view of the larger consciousness of which he has spoken on previous occasions. The question why is there evil in existence is the same, he said, as why is there imperfection; or in other words, why is there creation at all? We must take it for granted that it could not be otherwise; creation must be imperfect and gradual, and it is futile to ask the question why we are. The real question is, is this imperfection the final truth? Is evil permanent? The river has its banks, but are they the final facts about the river? Do not these obstructions themselves give its waters and onward motion? The boundaries of life are fixed in like manner, but its movement is onward towards perfection. The wonder is, not that there should be imperfection and strain and failure,

but that there should be law and order, goodness and love, and the perception of the eternal. The idea of God that man has ever felt in the depth of his soul is the wonder of wonders.

Just as one who has an ear for music realises the harmony of a song while he is only listening to a succession of notes, man is finding out that what is limited is not imprisoned within its limits, but is ever progressing. Imperfection is not the negation of goodness, but completeness manifested in parts, infinitely revealed within bounds. Pain, which is the feeling connected with finiteness, is not a fixture in our life. It is not an end in itself as joy is, and to meet it is to know that it cannot be a permanent end of our creation. The development of science has been gained at the cost of innumerable mistakes, yet no one believes that science is the most perfect system of disseminating mistakes. Error by its very nature cannot be constant or fit in with truth. It must quit its lodging as soon as it fails to pay its debt to the full. Its essence is impermanence, and every moment it is being corrected by the totality of things and is changing its existence. If we could realise at once all the deaths and failures in the world, the revelation would appal us; but evil is always moving, so that it does not effectually clog the current of our life, and air and water and earth remain sweet and clean for the use of mankind.

Those who by their profession or for other reasons are chiefly concerned with any particular aspect of life are apt to lay special stress upon everything bearing upon that aspect, and thus to lose the sense of its relative importance in the world. When science collects facts, for instance, to illustrate the struggle for existence that goes on in the kingdom of life, it creates a picture in our minds of nature red in tooth and claw, and gives a fixity to forms which are in themselves evanescent. By representing statically what is in motion things assume a weight in our minds which they have not in reality, and there must be a process of adjustment like that which enables us to bear the weight of air on our bodies which would otherwise crush us. If we had a flashlight turned upon the fact of death alone, the world would seem like a huge charnel-house, but it is significant that the thought of death has the least hold upon us because it is the most negative thing in life, as love is the most positive.

We do not dwell on the fact that we shut our eyes every second. It is the opening of the eyes that counts, and so life as a whole never takes death seriously. It laughs and dances and loves in its face, and only when we detach one individual fact of death do we realise its blankness and terror. The truth is that death is not the ultimate reality. It looks black as the sky looks blue, but it does not blacken man's existence, just as the sky does not leave its stain upon the wings of birds.

We meet with suffering and failure every day in some form or other, as a child learning to walk is constantly falling, and if we narrowed our observation to a limited space of time the failures would seem to loom very large. But the child, in spite of its repeated tumbles, has an impetus of joy within it which makes light of these, and leads it to exult over every successful attempt to balance itself. So it is with us. We are only imperfect in knowledge, power, and application of will, but if these only revealed our weakness to us we should die of depression. Our individual failures and miseries certainly loom large in our minds, but life instinctively takes a wider view. We have within us a hope that always walks in front of our present narrow experience. It will never accept any of our disabilities as a permanent fact, it sets no limit to our scope, it dares to assert that man is one with the All, and its wildest dreams are realised every day. The idea of truth is not in the limited present nor in our immediate sensations, but in the consciousness of the whole which gives us a taste of what we should have in what we already possess. Consciously or unconsciously, we have in our life this feeling of truth which is ever more than its appearance, for our life is facing the infinite, it is on the move, and for this reason our aspirations are infinitely more than our achievements. Evil cannot altogether stop the course of life on the highway and rob it of its possessions, for it has to pass on, it has to grow into good, it cannot stand at a fixed point and remain at war with all. If it stopped anywhere it would sink deep into the marrow of existence.

We do not really believe in evil, just as we do not believe that the strings of a violin were made to create only exquisite discords, though for every one who can play the violin there are thousands who cannot. Of course, there have been people

who asserted that existence was an absolute evil, but man has never taken them seriously, for pessimism is a mere pose, either intellectual or sentimental. Our life is optimistic, it wants to go on. Pessimism is a form of mental dipsomania, and those who suffer from it drink the strong drink of denunciation and crave ever and ever a deeper draught. Existence itself is here to prove that it cannot be evil. An imperfection which is not all imperfection, but which has perfection for its ideal, must go through perpetual forms of realisation. Thus it is the function of our intellect to realise truth through untruth, and we have to gain perfection by continually overcoming evil either outside ourselves or within. Our moral life, like our physical life, has material to burn up and transmute into other forms of energy, and the process is always going on. We have felt it and know it, and we have gained a faith which nothing can shake that the direction of humanity is from evil to good. Love and goodness are the positive elements in human nature, and in every clime and country man turns to them as to his highest ideal.

The question will be asked, what is goodness – what does our moral life mean? My answer is, that when a man begins to have an extended vision beyond himself, and realises that he is much more than he appears at present, he develops the consciousness of his moral nature. That which he has yet to become, the state not yet experienced, appears more real than what he is at the moment, and his perspective of life changes. Then comes the conflict between the lesser man and the greater man, our wishes and our wills, the craving for things that belong to the senses and the purposes which are in the heart. Then we begin to distinguish between what we immediately desire and what is desirable for the greater self; we are ready to sacrifice the present realisation for that of the future. In this we become great, for we realise truth. Even the selfish one has to recognise these facts and curb his desires in order to gain his ends; in other words, he is forced to become moral. This moral sense not only gives man the power to see that the self has a continuity in time, but it enables him to see that he is not restricted to himself. As he has a feeling for this future self which is outside his present consciousness, so he has a feeling for his greater self which is outside the limits of his personality.

There is no man who has never realised this, never sacrificed himself at some time in his life for another, so in order to give pleasure to one he loves. Even the most ill-disposed consciousness has to recognise that man is not a detached being, but part of a greater whole, when it seeks the power to do evil, for it cannot neglect truth and yet be strong. Selfishness has to be unselfish to some extent. A band of robbers must be moral in order to be robbers. They must plunder the whole world, but they may not rob each other. And very often it is our moral strength which gives us effective power to do evil, to exploit others and deprive them of their just rights.

The life of a man can be immoral, but that only means that it should be moral. Not to see is to be blind, but to see wrongly is to see only in an imperfect manner. The human consciousness realises that there is some purpose in life. A selfish man willingly undergoes trouble and suffering for the sake of what he desires and endures hardship and privation without a murmur simply because he knows that pain and trouble looked at from a limited space of time are the reverse when seen from a greater extent of time. To one who lives for an idea, the good of his country or the happiness of humanity, pain is even less important. To live the life of goodness is to live the life of all. Pleasure is for one's own self, but goodness is for the happiness of mankind, and both pleasure and pain lose their absolute power over us when we reach the standpoint of goodness, as martyrs have proved in history, and as we prove every day in our little martyrdoms. On the plane of selfishness both have their full weight, but on the moral plane they are so much lighter that a man who has reached it seems to us almost superhuman in the patience with which he faces the greatest hardships. Goodness is the realisation of our part in the infinite, and when we attain to that universal life which is the moral life we are free from pain and pleasure; we become full of the joy which springs from measureless love, and reach the heavenly Kingdom of Christ.

When Buddha meditated upon the way to release mankind from the grip of misery he realised that when man attains the higher life by merging the limited in the universal self he becomes happy, and not till then. A student of mine once complained,

after being out in a storm, that all the time it was raging he was conscious of feeling that this great confusion of nature behaved to him as if he were no more than a mere handful of dust. I said, if ever our individuality could make nature swerve from her path, then it would be the individual who would suffer most. But he persisted in pointing out that we could not ignore the "I am," that the "I" in us seeks for a relation which is individual to it. I replied that the relation of our "I" is with something that is *not* "I," and we must have a medium which is common to both and be absolutely certain that it is the same to the "I" as the "Not-I." Our "I" loses the meaning of its function if it can only see itself. The more vigorous our individuality, the more does it widen towards the universal which it is impelled by its nature to seek, acknowledging one law that works through life. The unyielding things of reality often cross our will and cause us pain, just as the firmness of the earth hurts the child when it falls; but it is learning to walk nevertheless, and it is the same firmness of the earth which hurts him that makes it possible for him to walk at all. We have therefore to work with the universal purpose, and know that it is for our highest good to do this, and the knowledge of the law is one of the channels of our relationship with things outside us which through it become our own. If man were made to live in a world where his personal self were the only factor to be taken into account, that world would be a veritable prison, for his joy consists entirely in his growing greater, and recognising that he is part of a vast whole. As long as we do violence to this truth we suffer grief and pain.

Once we expected that the laws of nature would be held in abeyance for our own special purposes. Now we know better, and we have become strong in the knowledge that the laws of nature cannot be set aside. But the power which they manifest is one with our own power. It will thwart us when we are small and rebellious, but it will help us when we are in unison with all. Just as throughout our bodily organisation there is a principle by which we can call the entire body our own, there is throughout the universe that principle of uninterrupted life by virtue of which we can call the universe our own. It is only the want of the necessary adjustment of our individual self to the universal self that

causes disease and poverty and wrong to exist, but man is realising this, and is on his way to conquer all that is evil. Lacking this adjustment our successes are our greatest failures, and the very fulfilment of our desires leaves us poorer. We want to enjoy privileges which others cannot share with us, though everything that is special to the individual must keep us in a state of warfare with the universal. We have to barricade our lives so that we may not lose our possessions, and the result is that even our homes are not homes to us, and we say we are not happy. But the universe is waiting to make us happy, if we were but ready to accept what it offers. In order to be powerful we have to submit to the universal purposes; so in order to be happy we have to submit our individual will to the sovereignty of the universal Will, and feel in truth that it is our own will. The most important lesson that man can learn is, not that there is pain in the world, but that it depends upon him to turn it into good, to transmute it into joy. That lesson has not been lost altogether, and there is no man who would willingly be deprived of his capacity to suffer, for that is his right as a man. His freedom is never in being saved trouble, but in taking it for his own good and making it an element in his own joy. We are not beggars; suffering is the coin that must be paid for everything that is valuable in life and love and perfection. Pain is indeed the vestal consecrated to the service of the immortal, and when she takes her place before the altar of the infinite she casts off her dark veil and presents herself to the worshipper as the revelation of an eternal joy.

14 June, 1913

### THE INQUIRER

p377-379(W)

#### Section : MEETINGS AND GENERAL NEWS

#### MR. TAGORE ON "THE PROBLEM OF SELF"

At one pole of my being, said Mr. Tagore, as he began his fourth lecture at the Caxton Hall on Monday night, I am one with stocks and stones. There I have to acknowledge the rule of universal

law, and that is where the foundation of my universal being lies. At the other pole of my being I am separate from all. There I have broken through the cordon of equality, and stand alone, absolutely unique and incomparable. The whole weight of the universe cannot crush out this individuality of mine. It is small in appearance, but great in reality, for it holds its own against the forces that would rob it of its distinction and drag it down to the dust. This is the individual self which has not duplicate in the whole universe. If it were demolished, then, though no material were lost the creative joy which was crystalised therein is gone. We are absolutely bankrupt if we are deprived of this speciality, and it is lost to the whole world if lost to us. It is most valuable because it is not universal, and through it we can gain the universe more truly than if we were unconscious of our separateness.

The desire we have to keep our uniqueness intact is really the desire of the universe acting in us. It is the joy of the infinite which gives us joy in ourselves. The individuality of man is considered by him his most precious possession, and he is willing to undergo suffering in order to maintain it. His sense of the separate self, which is dearer than life, has come from the eating of the tree of knowledge, and it involves constant striving and pain to maintain itself; in fact, its suffering measures its value. There is on the one side sacrifice, on the other attainment. If the self meant nothing to us but pain and sacrifice it would be worthless, and on no account would we undergo that sacrifice. Then it would be clear that the highest culmination of our efforts would be annihilation. But if this sacrifice ends in gain, and makes for fullness of life, then it will only make the individual life more precious.

These introductory remarks make it easier for me to answer a question which was once asked by one of my audience, as to whether the annihilation of self has not been held up by India as the supreme goal of man. We must keep in mind that man is never literal in his expression of any but the most trivial ideas, and those who seek to know the meaning of his words by the aid of the dictionary alone are like people who technically reach the house, but are stopped by the outside wall, and find no entrance within. This is why the teach-

ings of great prophets give rise to endless disputation when we try to explain their words instead of realising them in our lives. The man with too literal a mind is always busy with the nets and neglects the fishes. Not only in Buddhism and the Indian religions, but in Christianity, is language used symbolically, and the latter in its teaching of selflessness has used death as a symbol of man's deliverance from the life which is not true. This is the same as Nirvana, the extinction of the false self. In the thought of India the deliverance of man is the deliverance from ignorance (*avidya*) not from anything that is real, but from that which is negative and obstructs our vision of truth. When this obstruction is removed then the eyelids are raised, and that is no loss to the eyes. It is ignorance (*avidya*) that makes us think that our self has its completeness in itself. When we believe that, then we try to make the satisfaction of self the ultimate object of our endeavours. But the separate self has no means of holding us, for its true nature is to pass on, and if we cling to this thread which is passing through the loom of life we cannot make it serve the purpose of the fabric which is being woven. In an unknown language every word stops us, but it tells us nothing. We must rid ourselves of our ignorance and the bondage of words which convey nothing to us and prevent us from penetrating to the inner idea. When that ignorance is overcome every word remains in its place as before, but instead of hindering they lead us to the thought of which they are the manifestation. Thus it is in regard to the self, and the illusions (*maya*) which fetter us, making us think that it is an end in itself. That is why the wise men come to us and say, "Free yourself from *avidya*, from the grasp of the self which imprisons you."

We gain freedom when we attain our truest nature, and it is the function of religion not to destroy our nature, but to fulfil it. The word in Sanscrit which means religion has a deeper meaning than in other languages, it signifies the ultimate purpose that is working in and through us. *Dharma*, which is the truth within us, is in operation because it is inherent. It has been held by many that sinfulness is of the nature of man, and that only by the special grace of God can he be saved. This is like saying that it is only by a

special miracle that the seed grows into a tree. But do we not know that the appearance of a seed contradicts its true nature? There is nothing in the chemical constituents to indicate a tree, and only when the tree has begun to take shape do we begin to see its true purpose. In the same way, we have seen the great purpose taking shape in the lives of perfect men, and we know that although there are many ineffective and stunted lives that spell only failure, this is not their *dharma*. Their true function is to grow and branch out in all directions in the air and sunlight. The freedom of the seed is in its becoming a tree, and when we know the highest ideal of freedom which a man has, we know the meaning of his real self. At first he desires self-aggrandisement, possession, to retain things for his personal good, but our representative men have always been those who lived the life of self-sacrifice. The soul of man has continually sought for this fullest development, which is his *dharma*, his religion, and the individual self is the vessel which has to carry the sacrifice to the altar.

The self shows itself in two different aspects. There is the self which wants to be big, which seeks display, and the self which transcends itself, and, like the lamp giving up its oil to feed the flame, reveals its true meaning in giving itself away. This is the truth which Buddha preached. He did not preach self-abnegation, but the widening of love, and therein lies his truth. When we find that the state of Nirvana is attained through love, then we see that it is the highest culmination of love. Love is an end in itself. When we say "I love," there is no room for questioning. Even selfishness tells us that we must give away, but the giving is compulsory, and can only be likened to plucking unripe fruit which is not easily detached from the tree. All our belongings assume their weight by the ceaseless gravitation of selfish desires, and these we cannot easily cast away for they seem to belong to our very nature, and when we tear them from ourselves we bleed. But when we are possessed by love the things that closely attached to us lose their power of adhesion, and, far from experiencing loss, we find our highest fulfilment when we give them up. This is the true emancipation. That only which is done for love is done freely, and working for love is freedom in action.

This is what is meant by the teaching of disinterested activity in the *Gita*. Action we must have, but it is not perfect so long as it is not free, and our nature is obscured by means of action done through want, or fear, or compulsion. True freedom is not, then, freedom *from* action, but freedom *in* action, which can only be obtained in the work of love. God's manifestation is in his work of creation, and, as it is said in the Upanishads, knowledge, power, and action are of his nature. "From joy springs all this creation, by joy is it maintained, towards joy does it progress, and into joy does it enter." God's creation has not its source in necessity, but comes from his fulness of joy. It is his *love* which creates, therefore in creation is he himself revealed.

There must be separation, but a separation of love, not of repulsion. Repulsion has only the one element, severance; but love has two - the element of severance which is only the appearance, and the element of union which is the only truth. Self-separation has always been described by Indian philosophers as *maya* (illusion), because it has no intrinsic reality of its own. It casts a black shadow upon the fair face of existence, it is proud, domineering, wayward; it is ready to rob the world of all its wealth in order to gratify its desires. But all this has no reality; it is the mist which the sun dispels - the dark smoke and not the fire of love. To believe in it is to act like an ignorant man who imagines that it is the paper of which a bank-note is made that constitutes the magic virtue by which it confers its benefits. But the paper in itself is worthless, as the forms of separate life are worthless until transferred back into original reality of love, the bank of truth.

When a man's work is the outcome of love and joy, what he creates has the quality of immortality, and partakes of God's joy which is eternal. This it is which makes us sceptical of death even when the fact of death cannot be doubted. We come to realise that in the dualism of death and life there is a harmony, and that the soul which is finite in its expression and infinite in its principle must go through the portals of death in order to realise truth. Death is monistic, but life is dualistic. The self, in order to live, must go through continual growth and change, a continual death and life going on at the same

time. When we refuse to accept death, when the self feels an impulse to grow out of itself, when it reaches its limits of individuality, then comes the call to die, not to self, but to the false self. We have a dual set of desires in our being which it should be our endeavour to bring into harmony. In our physical nature we have a desire for health which is always doing its work of mending and repairing, skilfully restoring the balance whenever it is disturbed. But we have a greater body which is the social body, and in spite of our craving for pleasure, for gaining more than other people, for ministering to our own delight, at the cost of warfare and pain, there is the wish for the welfare of the society to which we belong, which transcends the personal, and is on the side of the infinite. The wise man will try to harmonise these desires, but harmony can never be reached through compulsion, and our will must attain its freedom by contact with error which it must learn to reject. We are always free up to a certain point, but the negative freedom of self-will is limited; it can turn away from its highest realisation, but not forever. We are finite on our negative side, and we cannot commit suicide and yet live. Evil is not infinite, and discord cannot be an end in itself. These things must ultimately cease. But we have freedom on the negative side in order that we may come to realise what goodness is, and in the freedom of our will there is the same dualism of appearance and truth which runs through the universe.

Self-will is only the appearance; love is the truth. Our self is illusion (*maya*) where it is merely individual and finite; it is truth, reality, where it recognises its essence in the universal and infinitude, in the supreme Self. This is what Christ meant when he said, "Before Abraham was I am." The individual "I am" attains its perfect and when it realises its freedom of harmony in the infinite "I am." It is its own will that imposes limits on a man, just as the chess player restricts his will in regard to the moving of the chess men, so that he does not move them irresponsibly and just as he pleases, but in accordance with the requirements of the game and the problem to be solved. God himself limits his own power. If he assumed his role of omnipotence his power would lose all its meaning, for power, to be power, must

act within limits. Water must always be water and earth must always be earth as by the limits of law, not as separated from God, so it is the limiting of its egoism which separates the self from him who has willingly set limits to his own will in order to give us power not reign in our little world. The tyrant who must have slaves looks upon them as instruments of his own purposes, and his self-interest cannot brook the least freedom in others because he is not really free himself. Love alone reveals harmony in freedom and unites us with God through endless renewals. It must follow the eternal rhythm and touch the fundamental unity at every step until it is balanced in beauty.

The day comes to us every morning white and fresh and fragrant, and yet it is the very Ancient Day that took up the infant earth in its embrace and set it amongst the stars. Death and decay cast but transitory shadows, and this old day of our earth is born again and again every morning. The universe is not a mere echo reverberating from sky to sky, the echo of a song once sung in the dim beginnings of things, but every moment it comes fresh from the lips of the Master. So the world is ever old and ever new. It is like a poem that strikes its measure at every step to give expression each moment to the inner freedom of its harmony. The boundary lines of our individuality in the same way thrust us back on the one hand, and lead us on the other hand towards infinity. This is the cause of the great revolutions in human history. Whenever the part tries to run on a separate course of its own the great pull of the All gives it a violent wrench, and brings it suddenly to a halt. By unrighteousness men may prosper and gain what they desire and triumph over their enemies, but finally they are cut off at the root and are doomed to extinction. Our roots must go deep down into the source of the universe if we are to develop personality. The self must bow in love and meekness and take its stand where great and small all meet. Its gain is through loss and it rises through surrender. Our pride of personality will be a curse to us if we cannot give it up in love. It is only the revelation of the infinite which is eternally new and beautiful in us, which gives the true meaning of ourself.

*16 June, 1913***THE TIMES**

p7c6(D)

**A TRIBUTE TO INDIAN POETS**

The Indian students in Great Britain gave a reception at the Criterion Restaurant on Saturday afternoon in honour of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, and the occasion was marked by a striking speech from Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, herself an Indian poet of note. More than 300 persons were present, including Sir Krishna Gupta, Mr. Gokhale, Sir John Muir-Mackenzie, Sir Sankaran Nair, the Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Mr. Abbas Ali Bag, Mr. Mead (president of the Quest Society), Mrs. P. L. Roy, Colonel and Mrs. Warlike, the Hon. Mr. Jinnah, Mrs. Cobb, Mr. and Mrs. Bevan, and the Hon. Montague Waldegrave.

Mr. J. M. MEHTA, welcoming Mr. Tagore, said the gathering represented 1,500 young and aspiring souls seeking to do honour to one of the greatest living sons of their Motherland.

Mrs SAROJINI NAIDU prefaced the duty of garlanding Mr. Tagore with a speech in which she said her heart had been pledged for years to every succeeding generation of students. There was a subtle bond between the poet and the student. On that occasion they were moved by the more sacred bond of nationhood. She asked Mr. Tagore to accept the garland of roses as the declaration of the love of his young countrymen for one who had gone so far in the service of the Motherland.

Mr. Tagore, deprecated the honours paid him. Such recognition was not for the poet, they did not pay a friend for the feast to which he invited them. If he had been so fortunate as to please them he was amply rewarded.

*18 June, 1913***THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**

p6c2-3(DE)

**"REALISATION IN LOVE"****MR. RABINDRA NATH TAGORE'S  
FIFTH LECTURE****TRUTH AND PARADOX**

"Realisation in Love" was the subject of Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore's fifth reading at Caxton Hall yesterday. In the course of his remarks, the Indian poet said:

"The eternal problem of the infinite and the finite, of the Supreme Being and our soul, is the sublime paradox that lies at the root of existence. We never can go round it, because we never can stand outside this problem and weigh it against any other possible alternative. But the problem exists in logic only. In reality it does not offer us any difficulty at all. Logically speaking, the distance between two points, however near, may be said to be infinite, because it is infinitely divisible; but we do cross the infinite at every step and meet the eternal in every second. Therefore some of the philosophers say there is no such thing as finitude; it is but an illusion. The real is the infinite, and it is only the unreality which causes the appearance of the finite; but how they come to exist at one and the same time is incomprehensible. We have a series of opposites in creation, such as the positive pole and the negative, the centripetal force and the centrifugal, attraction and repulsion. These are only different ways of asserting that the world in its essence is a reconciliation of pairs of opposing forces, which, like the left and the right hands of the creator, are acting in absolute harmony, yet acting from the opposite directions. If creation were but a chaos we should have to imagine the two opposing principles as trying to get the better of each other. But the universe is now under martial law, arbitrary and provisional. All forces have to come back in a curved line to their equilibrium. Their underlying principle must be unity, not opposition. This principle of unity is the mystery of all mysteries. The existence of a duality

at once raises a question in our minds, and we seek its solution in the one. When at last we find a relation between these two, and thereby see them as one in essence, we feel that we have come to the truth. And then we give utterance to this most startling of all paradoxes that one appears as many; that the appearance is the opposite of truth, and yet is inseparably related to it.

"There are men who lose that feeling of mystery on discerning the uniformity of law among the diversity of nature. They very often stop there, as if it were the final end of their search, only to discover that it does not even begin to emancipate their spirit. It only gives satisfaction to the intellect, but it does not appeal to our whole being. On the contrary, it deadens in us the sense of the infinite. Law in itself is a limit. It only shows that whatever is can never be otherwise. Therefore when a man is exclusively occupied with the search for the links of causality his mind succumbs to the tyranny of law in escaping from the tyranny of facts. The beauty of a poem is bound by strict laws, yet it transcends them. The laws are its wings, they do not keep it weighed down, they carry it to freedom. Its form is in law, but its spirit is in beauty. Law is the first step towards freedom, and beauty is the complete liberation which stands on the pedestal of law. Beauty harmonises in itself the limit and the beyond, the law and the liberty.

"This leads one to think how mysterious the relation of the human heart with nature must be! In the outer world of activity Nature has one aspect, but in our hearts, in the inner world, it presents an altogether different picture. Take the flower, for instance. It has not its only function in Nature, but has another great function to exercise in the mind of man. And what is that function? In Nature its work is that of a servant who has to make his appearance at appointed times, but in the heart of man it comes like a messenger from the king. What to the bee in Nature is merely colour and scent and the marks and spots which show the right track to the honey, is to the human heart beauty and joy, untrammelled by necessity. They bring a love-letter to the heart, written in many-coloured inks. It, indeed, seems wonderful that Nature has these two aspects at one and the same time, and so anti-

thetical – one being of thralldom and the other of freedom.

"Outwardly, nature is busy and restless; inwardly she is all silence and peace! She has toil on one side and leisure on the other. You see her brutality only when you see her from without, but within her heart is a limitless beauty. Our Seer says: 'From joy are born all creatures, by joy they are sustained, towards joy they progress, and into joy they enter.' This joy, whose other name is love, by its very nature must have duality for its realisation. The lover seeks his own other self in his beloved. Our soul is the loved one, it is his other self. We are separate, but if this separation were absolute, then there would have been absolute misery and unmitigated evil in this world. Then from untruth we never could reach truth, and from sin we never could hope to attain purity of heart; then all opposites would ever remain opposites, and we could never find a medium through which our differences could ever tend to meet. But, on the contrary, we find that the separateness of objects is in a fluid state. Their individualities are ever changing; they are meeting and merging into each other, till science itself is turning into metaphysics, matter losing its boundaries, and the definition of life becoming more and more indefinite.

"The human soul is on its journey from the law to love, from discipline to liberation, from the moral to the spiritual. Buddha preached the discipline of self-restrain and moral life; it is a complete acceptance of law. But this bondage of law cannot be an end in itself by mastering it thoroughly we acquire the means of getting beyond it. It is going back to the infinite love, which is manifesting itself through the finite forms of law.

"He who wants to reach this stage, according to Buddha, shall have measureless love for all creatures. Want of love is a degree of callousness: for love is the perfection of consciousness. We do not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we do not comprehend because we do not love. Love spontaneously gives itself in endless gifts. But these gifts lose their fullest significance if through them we do not reach that love, which is the giver. To do that we must have love in our own heart. He who has no love in him values the gifts of his lover only according to their usefulness. It only

touches us at the point where it covers a want. On the other hand a mere token is of permanent worth to us, for it is not of any special use. It is an end in itself.

"The question is, in what manner do we accept this world, which is a perfect gift of joy? Have we been able to receive it in our hearts, or are we frantically busy making use of the forces of the universe to gain more and more power? We feed and we clothe ourselves from its stores; we scramble for its riches, and it becomes for us a field of fierce competition. But were we born for this, to extend our proprietary rights over this world and make of it a marketable commodity? In the lands where cannibalism is prevalent, man looks upon man as his food. In such a country civilisation can never thrive, for there man loses his higher value and is made utterly cheap. But there are other kinds of cannibalism, perhaps not so gross, but not less heinous, for which one need not travel far. In countries higher in the scale of civilisation, we find sometimes man looked upon as a mere body, and he is bought and sold in the market by the price of his flesh only. And sometimes he gets his sole value from being useful; he is made into a machine and he is traded upon by the man of money to acquire for him more money. Thus our lust, our greed, our love of comfort result in cheapening man to his lowest value. It is self-deception on a large scale. Our desires blind us to the truth that there is in man, and they deaden our consciousness, and are a gradual method of spiritual suicide. It produces ugly sores in the body of civilisation, gives rise to its hovels and brothels, its vindictive penal codes, its cruel prison systems, its organised method of exploiting foreign races to the extent of permanently injuring them by depriving them of the discipline of self-government and means of self-defence. Of course man is useful to man, because his body is a marvellous machine, and his mind an organ of wonderful efficiency. But he is a spirit as well, and this spirit is truly known only by love. We never can have a true view of man unless we have a love for him. Civilisation must be judged and prized not by the amount of power it has developed, but by how much it has evolved and given expression to, by its laws and institutions, the love of humanity.

"As with man, so with the universe. When we look at the world through the veil of our desires we make it small and narrow, and fail to perceive its full truth.

Yet the more our knowledge progresses the more it becomes difficult for us to establish this separateness, and all the imaginary boundaries we had set up around ourselves vanish one after another. Through our progress in science the wholeness of the world and our oneness with it is becoming clearer to our mind. When this perception of the perfection of unity is not merely intellectual when it opens out our whole being into a luminous consciousness of the all, then it becomes a radiant joy, an overspreading love. When a man feels the rhythmic throb of the soul-life of the whole world in his own soul, then is he free. Then he enters in the secret courting that goes on between this beautiful world-bride, veiled with the veil of the many-coloured finiteness, and the bridegroom in his spotless white.

"In love all the contradictions of existence merge themselves and are lost. Love must be one and two at the same time. Our heart ever changes its place till it finds love, and then it has its rest. In love, loss and gain are harmonised. In its balance-sheet credit and debit accounts are in the same columns, and gifts are added to gains. In love at one of its poles you find the personal, and at the other the impersonal. Bondage and liberation are not antagonistic in love. For love is most free, and at the same time most bound. It is the high function of love to welcome all limitations and to transcend them. For nothing is more independent than love, and where else, again, shall we find so much dependence? For love, thralldom is as glorious as freedom.

The Vaishnava religion has boldly declared that God has bound Himself to man, and in that consists the greatest glory of human existence. Beauty is His wooing of our heart. There comes the call for our love. It seeks for love in us, and joy in us. And joy is everywhere. It exists to show that the bonds of law can only be explained by love; they are like body and soul. Joy is the realisation of the truth of Oneness; the Oneness of our soul with the world and of the world-soul with the Supreme Lover.

21 June, 1913

**THE INQUIRER**

p395-395(W)

**Section : MEETINGS AND GENERAL NEWS****MR. TAGORE ON  
"REALISATION IN LOVE"**

MR. TAGORE concluded the series of lectures which he has been giving at Caxton Hall on Tuesday evening, when he delivered a discourse on "Realisation in Love" to a large audience. There is, he said, the eternal problem of the co-existence of the infinite and the finite, of the Supreme Being and our own soul. This is the sublime paradox that lies at the root of life, and we can never stand outside this problem; but it exists in logic only. In reality it does not offer us any difficulty at all. In logic the difference between two points may be said to be infinite because it is infinitely divisible, but we cross the infinite at every step and meet the eternal in every second; therefore some of our philosophers say there is no such thing as infinitude. It is *maya*, illusion. The real is infinite. But the word *maya* is a mere name. When we use it we are only saying that with all truth there is the *appearance* of truth, but how they came to exist at one and the same time is incomprehensible. There is a series of opposites running through creation, such as the centripetal and the centrifugal forces, attraction and repulsion, cold and heat, the true and the false. These expressions are no explanation of the fact; they are only a way of saying that there are in the world these opposing forces, which are acting in absolute harmony, though from different directions. There is a bond of union between our two eyes which makes them act in harmony, and there is also this unison between the dual forces in the universe which causes them to work in perfect accord with each other. That is why there is no confusion. If creation were but a chaos we should have to imagine the two opposing principles as trying to get the better of each other. But the universe is not under arbitrary martial law. There is no force which can go on indefinitely in its course when breaking all the laws of harmony, but it has to come back in curved lines to its equilibrium in a rhythm that is marvelously

beautiful. This principle of unity is a mystery of mysteries. It raises at once a question in our minds and we find the solution of it in turning to the One. When we find the relation between these opposites and discover that they are one in essence, we feel that we have reached truth, and we are able to say that appearance is the opposite of truth and yet is inseparably related to it. There are men who lose a sense of mystery which is at the root of all our joy when they discover the uniformity of law in nature. They stop at that point, as if the uniformity of law was the final end of their search, only to find that it does not even begin to emancipate the spirit. It only causes satisfaction to the intellect and dims the sense of the infinite. For the inner meaning of life is not in the uniformity of law any more than the inner meaning of a poem is in the detached sounds and meters that compose it. He who discovers the inner meaning of the poem alone realises the law of evolution which its ideas, its music, and its forms follow. Law is a limitation in itself. It only shows that whatever is can never be otherwise. Grammar is not literature, and prosody is not a poem. Literature conforms to the laws of language, but only to transcend them, for the laws are its wings and do not weigh it down but carry it to freedom. Its form is in law, therefore, but its spirit is in beauty. Law is the first step towards beauty, which may be likened to a statue standing upon the pedestal of law. In reading the world-poem the discovery of the law of its rhythm and movement, its mysterious forces and various forms, is a great achievement, but we cannot stop there. We have only reached a railway station on our journey and are still far from home. He only attains the final truth who knows that the whole universe is a creation of joy.

In the outer world nature is all activity, but in the inner world it presents an altogether different picture. The daintiness and beauty of a flower, its colour, its fragrance, and perfection of form are all intended for a special purpose. When that is fulfilled it sheds its exquisite petals, its colour dies, it is deprived of perfume, and it would thus seem as if necessity were the only factor in nature. The bud develops into the flower, the flower gives way to the fruit, the seed is formed which shall again evolve the bud, and so the chain of activity goes on unbroken.

In the great factory of nature there are innumerable departments where endless work is going on, and here the lovely flower, for all her gorgeous tints and lovely shape, is like a labourer toiling in the sun and shade with no time to seek enjoyment or freedom for frolic. But when this flower enters the heart of man how different it appears. There it is the very symbol of beauty and repose, and our hearts tell us that we are not mistaken in beholding it free from the necessity of toil which is laid upon it. It carries a certificate which shows that it is capable of useful work, but when it knocks at the door of our souls beauty is then its only recommendation. How, then, should we give credit to one of these qualifications and not deny the other? "Verily from the everlasting joy do all objects have their birth" - that is the solution of this problem, and so we find that the flower has not only its function in nature, but it has another great function to exercise in the heart of man. In nature its work is the work of a servant who has to make his appearance at appointed times; but in the heart of man it comes like a messenger from a king - a messenger bearing to souls in exile tidings from another shore, who whispers, "He has sent me. I am a messenger of the beautiful, of the One who is truth and love. He has not forgotten thee but will rescue thee, and draw thee unto Himself, and hold thee for His own. This is the token—this colour and loveliness which can only spring from His joy."

However busy our outward life may be, therefore, there is an inner chamber where beauty comes and goes without any hindrance, and there the iron chains of cause and effect are turned to unalloyed gold. This is the law of opposites; on the one side thralldom, on the other freedom, on the one side necessity, on the other beauty and joy. Outwardly nature is busy and restless, inwardly she is all tranquility and peace. She is toiling in one aspect, and in another is full of leisure. Our saints have said "From joy springs all this creation, by joy it is maintained, toward joy does it go, and into joy does it enter," and this is the truth which lies at the heart of things. The man who uttered those words did not ignore law; he fully recognised its inexorableness.

"Fire burns for fear of him (that is, by reason of the law); the sun shines by fear of him, and for fear of him the clouds of death perform their office,"

and yet he sings his chant of joy, realising that the immortal Being manifests himself in joy, that out of his fullness of joy comes his revelation, and that it is the nature of this abounding joy to realise itself in forms which are law. The joy which is without form must create and translate itself into forms. Man in his role of a creator is ever creating these forms, and they are born of joy whose other name is love. The singer divides himself into two. He has within him his other self as the hearer, and the outside audience is merely an extension of this other self. The lover seeks his other self in the beloved, and in the same way the eternal Being has divided Himself, and draws to Himself man's soul which is the beloved one who is his other self.

We are separate, but if the separation were absolute there would have been absolute misery and unmitigated evil in the world. Then from sin and wretchedness we could never have hoped to attain purity of heart. Then we could have had no knowledge of unity, of co-operation, of love, and the blending of hearts. But the separateness of all objects is in a fluid state. They are merging into each other when even matter is losing its fixity as to find fresh words to describe is transmutations. Yes, or separate soul has been divided from the Supreme Soul, not, however, in alienation, but in the fullness of truth. For this reason evil and untruth cannot be finalities. The human soul can transform them into new power and beauty. The singer transforms his joy into singing. And the hearer has to translate the singing back again into the joy which produced it; in the same way we are working back to the infinite. The human soul is on its journey from law to love. It is learning and discipline the way to deliverance. It is going back to Brahma the infinite love, which is beyond law. And for this reason, as Buddha taught, we must abandon our lusts and desires, entertain no hatred for anyone, but have measureless love for all even as the mother has love for her children, free from all antagonisms, obeying the law of the universal goodwill.

Want of love is a degree of callousness, for love is the perfection of consciousness. We do not apprehend because we do not love, or we do not love because we do not apprehend. Love is the ultimate meaning of everything that surrounds us. It is the white light of pure consciousness that emanates from Brahma. "Who could have breathed or loved if the

sky were not filled with joy and love?" Through love therefore we must widen and extend our consciousness till we reach the Giver of Love. But this can come about only when we give *ourselves* in love. He who gives not himself values the gifts of his lover only because of their utility. But what is useful only touches us at the point where we have some want, and when the want is satisfied it becomes a nuisance. On the other hand a mere token becomes a thing of beauty to the one who loves truly because it ministers to no special need but is a symbol of the joy that transcends all material things.

The question for us is, in what manner do we accept this world which is a perfect gift of joy? Are we able to accept it in our heart, where we keep things that are of deathless value for us? We draw our strength from it, we feed ourselves and clothe ourselves from its stores, we scramble for its gifts and hidden treasures and make everything a marketable commodity; thus we lose its chief value. We make it cheap by our sordid desires just like a greedy child who tears leaves from a precious book and tries to swallow them. There are lands where cannibalism is practised, where man loses his highest value, and civilisation is impossible; but there are also forms of cannibalism elsewhere, physical, mental, and spiritual, and true civilisation is impossible while it continues. Man is looked upon too often as a mere body whose sole value is in its utility. He is made into a machine for the making of money for those who have power to crush his spirit. Our love of material things, of enjoyment and luxury, results in the cheapening of human beings and thus we ourselves do the greatest wrong to our own souls. This deadens the consciousness and is nothing more or less than spiritual suicide. All the evils which belong to our civilisation result from that. Of course, man is useful to man because his body is a marvellous machine, and his mind a thing of wonderful efficiency, but he is a spirit as well, and his spirit is known only through love. With our limited knowledge of him it becomes easy to treat him unjustly, and to be pleased when we can get out of him more than we have paid for. But when we know him as a spirit we know him as our own, and realise that in making use of him solely for profit we merely gain in money or comfort what we lose in truth.

It is our desires which limit the scope of our self-realisation, and set up barriers of exclusiveness which doom us to extinction. Sin is not one mere action but an attitude of life which takes for granted that its limited self is the goal of its activity and that we are all separate individuals each living for himself. But the spirit that becomes one with the whole through love cannot die. Civilisation must be judged by how far it has given expression to love in its laws, its social systems, its dealings with subject races, its recognition of man as a spirit rather than as a machine. Ancient civilisations fell into decay owing to callousness of heart when either the state or some conquering nation began to enslave men and subject them to tyranny; but civilisation can never sustain itself upon cannibalism of any sort, for that which is true in man can only be nourished by love and justice.

The world serves our needs, but we are bound to it by a truer bond than that of necessity. Our love of life is really our desire to continue our relationship with it, and we are attached to it by numberless threads which extend from this earth to the stars. Every time we lose some of our badges of absolute distinction by which we hold the right to regard ourselves apart from others we receive a shock, but we have to submit, for division and separation must sooner or later come under the wheels of Truth and be ground to dust. We must recognise that this world is our compeer, nay, that we are one with it, a fact which science is daily making clearer. This conception opens our consciousness to the beauty of the whole till it is filled with the conviction of immortality. When a man feels the rhythmic throb of the world in his own soul, then he is free, then he enters into the secret of existence, then he knows that he is the partaker of this gorgeous festival of life and is the honoured guest at the feast of Love. In love all the contradictions of existence are merged and lost — love that must be two and one at the same time. Only in love is motion and rest one and the same. In love loss and gain are harmonised, and the credit and debit accounts are put in the same column. At the one pole there is the personal, and at the other the impersonal, but without this ego, what is love? and, again, with this ego alone, how is love possible? Love is most free and yet bound. If God were absolutely free there would

be no creation, but He who is love bound himself to man by the tie of creation, and in Him finite and infinite are made one. All beauty is expressive of the joy of love, but it never insults our freedom or commands us to acknowledge its supremacy. It seeks for love in us, and love can never be known but by love. In the beauty of spring and the glory of the summer sky joy exists and shows us that the bondage of law can only be explained by love. They are like body and soul, and symbolise the union of the world-soul with the Supreme Lover.

At the close of the lecture Mr. Mead gave expression in a sympathetic and earnest speech to the sense of gratitude which all present must feel to Mr. Tagore for the five discourses he had given them, for the inspiration of his radiant teaching, and the light he had thrown upon the profound religious philosophy of ancient India.

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28 June, 1913

**THE INQUIRER**

p408-410/W

#### **Section : MEETINGS AND GENERAL NEWS**

#### **MR. TAGORE ON "THE REALISATION OF BRAHMA"**

What may be considered as the final lecture of a series delivered recently by Mr. Rabindranath Tagore at Caxton Hall, and reported in our columns, was given to the members of the Quest Society at Kensington Town Hall last Thursday. The subject was "The Realisation of Brahma." Mr. Tagore began with a saying from the Upanishads, "A man becomes true if in this life he can apprehend God; if not, it is the greatest calamity for him." But what, the lecturer asked, is the nature of this attainment of God? It is quite evident that the infinite is not like one object among many to be definitely classified and kept among our possessions, or to be used as an ally specially favouring us in our politics, warfare, or social competition. We cannot put our God in the same list with our country houses, more cars, or credit at the bank. We must try to understand the true character of the desire that

a man has when his soul longs for his God. It does not consist in wishing to make a valuable addition to his belongings. It is a weary task, that of adding continually to our stores; in fact, when the soul seeks God she seeks her final escape from the gathering and accumulating which never seems to end. No, it is not an additional object that she wants, but the permanent in all that is impermanent, the highest abiding joy unifying all enjoyments. Therefore, when the Upanishads teach us to realise everything in Brahma, it is not meant that we are to seek something extra or manufacture something new, for everything that there is in the universe is enveloped by God. "Enjoy whatever is given by Him, and harbour not in your mind the greed for wealth which is not your own." When you know that everything is filled by Him, and that whatever you have is His gift, then you realise the infinite in the finite, the Giver in the gifts. Then you know that all the facts of reality have their only meaning as manifestations of the one truth, and all your wealth of possessions is itself only significant for you in the relations it establishes with the infinite.

It cannot be said, therefore, that we can find Brahma as we find other objects. There is no question of searching for Him in one thing in preference to another, in one place instead of another. "We do not have to run to the nearest shop for the morning light, which is all about us when we wake, and so we have only to give ourselves up to find that God is everywhere. This is the reason why Buddha admonished his followers to free themselves from the limitations of the self - a teaching which, if there were nothing else more permanent and satisfying to take the place for the self, would be meaningless. No man can be enthusiastic about surrendering everything in order to gain nothing at all. Our daily worship of God, however, is not a process of daily gaining Him, but it lies in extending our devotion to Him in goodness and love. "Be lost in Brahma like an arrow that has completely penetrated its target." This is the consciousness of being absolutely enveloped by Brahma. It is not the act of mere concentration of mind. It must be the aim of the whole of our life. In all our thoughts and actions we must be aware of the

infinite, so that the realisation of this truth becomes easier to us every day. "None could live or move if the energy of the all-pervading joy did not fill the sky"; therefore, in all our deeds let us follow the impetus of the infinite energy and be glad.

It may be said that the infinite is beyond our attainment, so it is for us as though it were not. Yes, it is, if the word attainment implies any idea of possession. But we must remember that the highest enjoyment of man does not lie in *having*, but in striving to reach what is beyond him. Our physical pleasures leave no margin for the unrealised. When we take food that is a complete act of possession, but when our hunger is satisfied our pleasure is satisfying its ends. In our intellectual pleasures, the margin is far wider, but the principle is the same. What we are really seeking in all our pleasures is the infinite. In an Indian lyric the lover says to his beloved, "I feel as if I had gazed upon the beauty of thee from my birth, yet my eyes are hungry still - as if I had held thee pressed to my heart for millions of years, yet my heart is not satisfied." Our desire for wealth is not the desire for a large sum of money; it is indefinite, and the most fleeting joys we know are momentary touches of the infinite. The tragedy of life consists in our attempts to stretch the limits of things that can never become infinite, and it is clear that the real desire of our soul is to get beyond all her possessions. Surrounded by things which she can touch and feel, she cries, "I am weary of getting. Ah, where is he who is never to be attained?"

Throughout the history of mankind the spirit of renunciation has been the deepest reality of the human soul. When she says of anything, "I do not want it, for I am above it," she gives expression to the highest truth within her. By the very act of possession we know that we are greater than the things we possess, and it is a perfect misery to be kept bound up with things less than ourselves. It is only when a man truly realises what his possessions are that he has no more illusions about them. He knows his soul is far above them and he is free from their bondage. He realises his soul truly by outgrowing his possessions, and his progress in the path of eternal love is through a series of renunciations.

That we cannot absolutely possess the infinite

Being is not a mere intellectual proposition. It has to be experienced, and this experience is bliss. The bird realises at every beat of its wings that the sky is boundless, and that it can never get beyond, and this gives it a sense of joy which it never experiences in the cage where it is limited to the necessary. Thus the soul must soar in the infinite, and feel every moment that in not being able to come to the end of her attainment is her supreme joy, her final freedom. Man's abiding happiness consists in giving himself up to what is greater than himself, to ideas that are larger than his individual needs and make it easier for him to part with all that he has, not excepting his life if it is required, to further a cause or help his country. His life is indeed miserable and sordid till he finds some truly great idea which can release him from the tyranny of his belongings. Jesus and Buddha and all the great religious teachers represent such an ideal, and point out opportunities for self-surrender. When they bring forth their divine alms-bowl we cannot help giving, but we find that in this giving is our truest joy and deliverance, and we unite ourselves to that extent with the infinite. Man is not complete. He is yet to be. He is small and limited, and if we could conceive him stopping where he is for all eternity we should picture the most awful hell imaginable. Hell is not to advance; in his "to be" is his heaven, and for this he is always hungering.

The finite has its place in the world of necessity. There man goes about searching for food to keep him alive and clothing to supply him with warmth. It is his natural function to get things for his physical needs, but the act of getting is partial. It is limited by his necessities. We can have a thing only to the extent of our requirements. Our relation to food is only in feeding, our relation to a house is only in habitation. *To get* is always to get partially, and it can never be otherwise, therefore the craving for acquisition belongs only to the finite self. But that side of our being which is towards the infinite seeks, not wealth, but freedom and joy. There our function is not *to get* but *to be* - to be one with Brahma in the region of unity and the infinite. Oneness with God lies in *becoming*, not in *having*, more. The West has accepted as its teacher him who proclaimed his complete oneness with the Father, and exhorted his followers to be perfect even as their Father is perfect;

but, notwithstanding, it has never been reconciled to this supreme ideal, and it regards as blasphemy any implication of man becoming God. Christ's truth has not taken possession of the Christian West, but in the East the highest wisdom always teaches, not that it is our function to gain God, but that all we can ever aspire to is to become one with Him.

In the region of nature we grow by acquisition, in the world of the spirit we grow by losing ourselves and uniting. To gain a thing is by its nature partial, but *being* is complete. It belongs to our wholeness, and springs not from any necessity but from our affinity with the infinite. Yes, we must become Brahma nor shrink from avowing it. Our existence is meaningless if we never aspire to realise the highest perfection that there is. But can it then be said that there is no difference between Brahma and our individual soul? Obviously there is. Call it delusion or ignorance, or what you will, the difference is there and cannot be explained away. Brahma is Brahma, the infinite ideal of perfection, but we are not what we truly are. We are ever to become true, ever to become Brahma. There is the eternal play of love in this relation between being and becoming, and in the depth of this mystery is the source of all joy and beauty in creation. In the music of the rushing stream sounds the joyous assumption "I shall become the sea." It has no other alternative. As it broadens to the river it sweeps past the towns and villages on its banks which it serves in various ways, but it can have only partial relationship with these; it can never become a town or a village or a forest. But it can, and does, become the sea. The lesser moving water has its affinity with the great motionless water of the ocean, to which it glides through a thousand objects on its banks. But the sea can never be part and parcel of the river. The soul can only become Brahma as the river can become the sea. She touches everything at one of her points and passes on, but she can never leave Brahma and pass on. Once she reaches His repose she gains peace, but there is then a new motive for her movements, for this ocean of infinite rest gives purpose and significance to endless activities.

Every sentence in a poem lends something to the central idea, and when the reader catches that idea the poem is for him full of beauty, and radi-

antly significant. If the poem goes on interminably without developing a central idea, throwing off disconnected thoughts and images, it becomes wearisome in the extreme. The progress of our soul is like a perfect poem, its one idea is of beauty and joy. But if we do not see that idea and catch its infinite meaning, then our life seems evil and aimless. It is like learning by heart, as I did in childhood, the Sanskrit grammar which is written in symbols, without having it explained. Day after day we go on toiling without knowing towards what end. This, then, is the truth of our soul and this is her joy - that she must ever be growing into Brahma, that all her movements must be modulated by this ultimate idea, and all her creations be given to the supreme Giver of perfection.

By the process of knowledge alone we can never know the infinite. "From Brahma words come back baffled as well as the mind, but he who knows Him by the joy of Him is free from all fear." Knowledge is partial because our intellect is only an instrument, but Brahma is perfect and he can only be known by joy and love. Joy is knowledge in its completeness; it is knowing with our whole being. The intellect sets us apart from the things that are to be known, but love finds its knowledge by union. Such knowledge is immediate and admits of no doubt. It is the same as knowing our own selves, but more so. "Mind can never know Brahma, words can never describe Him." We can only come into knowledge of Him by union. We must be one with our Father, and perfect as He is perfect. We have that within us already where space and time cease to rule, and in that everlasting abode of the soul the revelation of the *paramatman*, the supreme Soul, is complete. He has chosen our soul as His bride, and the marriage has been accomplished. There is in this union no room for evolution to act the part of master of the ceremonies. The nameless immediate Presence is ever here in our inmost being, and because this marriage has been accomplished in timeless time, now goes on the endless play of love. He who has been gained in eternity is being pursued in time and space, in this world and in the worlds beyond. When the soul-bride understands this well her heart is blissful and at rest. She knows that she, like the river, has attained her consummation at one end of

her being and at the other is still ever attaining it, and when she realises that both ends are inseparably connected she knows the world as her own household by right of knowing the Master of the world as her Lord. Then all toil and suffering are welcome, and only come as trials of her strength and her love. But so long as she remains obstinately in the dark, lifts not her veil, does not recognise her lover, and only knows the world dissociated from Him, she lives like a handmaid doomed to subservience where she might reign as a queen. "She passes from starvation to starvation, from trouble to trouble, from fear to fear."

What was that snatch of song I once heard at a festival – "Ferryman, take me across to the other shore?" The carter in India sings, "Take me across." The grocer deals out his goods singing "Take me across." What is the meaning of this cry? We feel that we have not reached the goal, and that with all our striving we do not attain our object and come to an end. Like a child dissatisfied with its toys we cry, "Not this, not this." But where is that other shore and what does it mean to reach it? Is it to take refuge from all our griefs, to be relieved of all our responsibilities in life? No, in the very heart of our activities we are seeking for the end, so while our lips utter this prayer to be carried away our busy hands are never idle. For this shore and the other are one and the same in God. This "I" of mine toils hard day and night for a home that it can call its own. Alas! there will be no end to its sufferings till it finds itself in Thee. When this home of mine is made Thine, that very moment is the soul "taken across" even while the walls still enclose it. This "I" is restless, and it is working for gains which it can never grasp. In its attempts to acquire that which is for all it is hurt, and hurts others in its turn. But as soon as it is able to say "All my work is Thine," everything remains the same, but it is "taken across." Where can I join Thee except in this my work, transformed in Thy work? If I leave my work I can never join Thee in Thy work. Therefore, in the midst of our home and our labour the prayer arises, "Lead me across," for here stretches the sea, and here, not far away, is the other shore waiting for us to reach it in the everlasting present.

11 July, 1913

**THE EVENING STANDARD AND ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE**

p6c3(DE)

## AN INDIAN ALLEGORY

### THE IRISH PLAYERS IN A NEW ROLE

"The Well of the Saints" and a play by the author of "Gitanjali," on the same bill, was an experiment which, at the Court Theatre last evening, proved well worth the making. The gruesome irony of the former gained in force from the comparison with the wistful pathos of the other. There were, however, several points in common between the two. There was the same illusive atmosphere, and the same symbolical tendency of the plot. In both, also, there was the deeper significance that passed unnoticed under the attention of the casual observer.

In Mr. Rabindranath Tagore's play, "The Post Office," the interest is centred in an allegory which is barely definable. Amal, the adopted child of Madhev, is sick and forbidden to leave the house. He entreats to be allowed to talk to passers-by, and then sits in the house front. A dairymaid for his amusement tells him the purposes of a building opposite – a post office. There the King's letters are received, and, mayhap, one will arrive for Amal. The boy repeats this to sympathetic listeners, but the headman scoffs at the idea. When the illness becomes worse, a fakir stays at Amal's bedside. He assures him that the letter will come. The headman brings a scroll of paper, and mockingly tenders it. But the dream comes true. The Royal physician enters, and then, while they are waiting for the King, Amal dies.

The story was told with all the wealth of colour and imagery of which Mr. Tagore is master, and the vividness of the word picture added beauty to the simple but effective scenery. The boy's prattle in describing the forests and rivers of his imagination were spoken by Miss Lilian Jagoe with a skill which enhanced the poetry, and her acting was in all respects admirable. Mr. Arthur Sinclair was convincing as Madhav, and gave a sympathetic study of the part. The fakir of Mr. Fred O'Donovan and the headman of Mr. Philip Guiry were both excellent performances.

July 5, 1913.]

## THE NATION.

525

al than her favorite perfumer, or a dandy might wish at he could scent his handkerchief as daintily as the de humble-bee. And what dandy could invent a more nderful game of cross-purposes with love for a summer ernoons than is played every day now by those same ne humble-bees? At a few chosen spots in any lane, o dashing blade after another buzzes in, and without ghting, darts on again, every bee performing the same and because each of the calling-places is scented with e flower-like essence that belongs to the players. It is ame that will go on for a whole month, for not till then l the first humble-bee princess dream of getting rried. It is very doubtful whether the scent ever bears y part in the final wooing. It has just been borrowed one sox from the other, and turned into a grotesquely guous instrument of dandy rivalry.

In a chapter of his splendid book on "Insects" (uck), entitled "The Courtship of Insects," Mr. Harold stin discusses some other cases. He takes mainly the le side, wondering whether the doctrine of an uberant vitality is enough to account for the bright ors of certain male butterflies, whose females are wdy, or whether too much weight is placed by those o object to the idea of sexual selection, upon the sup- sed inadequacy of the insects' aesthetic sense. Could ace of butterflies, by the age-long submission of terns on the one hand and their rejection and refusal the other, evolve the wonderful harmonies and con- ats that we know, and whose undoubted excellence is nified by human approval? That there is selection of ne kind is certain. The antler moth is a middle-sized, onspicuous example out of our hundred or so British ctuids. Professor Poulton tells how dozens of suitors ss round one female, not fighting, merely showing-off, d then, suddenly, she selects one, and all the others va. Some butterflies, equipped though they seem to for mere bandbox beauty, fight shrewdly for their e, and others, notably some of those not very boldly ored, have fragrant scent-scales—the green-veined ite smelling of lemon verbena, and the small white of eet-briar. Turning to the musicians, Bates said of the ld cricket: "The male has been observed to place elf in the evening at the entrance to its burrow and idulate until a female approaches, when the louder tes are succeeded by a more subdued tone, whilst the cessful musician caresses with his antennae the mate has won." Could a more tender picture be drawn of human couple? Here seems to be a true "engaged" ried, for surely there is a possibility that the suitor o has won by the noisier public performance may fail the quieter rôle of domestic endearment.

M. Fabre has told us much about the courtship of sects. Sometimes the story is gruesome, for some nales, like our own male Bluebeard, end by eating their

## Short Studies.

## THE JUDGE.

KHIRODA, at the fag end of her youth, woke up one morning to find that her lover had departed in the night, leaving her destitute. She found that, in all the thirty-eight years of her life, she had not even made one person her own, nor earned the right even to the corner of a home in which to live and die. She realised that life had no pity upon her, and would relax none of its claims, which must be attended to down to the smallest detail, and she rolled on the floor, smiting its hardness with her forehead in an agony of despair.

Evening came, and it grew dark. Khiroda had not the heart to tidy the room, or to light the lamp. Her hungry child cried till it could cry no longer, and fell asleep, tired, under the bedstead. A knock came to the door, and a man's voice called out, "Khiro, Khiro." Khiroda flung open the door, and rushed out at him who stood there, with her broom putting the amorous youth to precipitate flight. Then, convulsively clutching the child to her bosom, she went out of the house and jumped into the well.

The splash brought the neighbors hurrying to the spot, and the bodies were fished out. The mother was unconscious, but the child was dead. Khiroda was brought round in the hospital, and was committed to the sessions by the magistrate.

## II.

Mohit Datta was the Sessions Judge. He sentenced Khiroda to death. Her advocates tried their utmost to get some mitigation of the sentence, but with no success.

There was some reason for this severity of his attitude towards feminine frailty, as a glimpse into his earlier history will disclose.

Mohit in his undergraduate days lived near the house of an elderly couple with a young widowed daughter, Sasi. What little of the world Sasi used to see from behind the barrier of her lonely widowhood seemed to her like some golden land of mystery, where happiness stalked abroad. Unsatisfied longing seemed to belong only to the interior of her bosom, which cribbed and cramped the beatings of her heart.

In the intervals of her domestic duties, Sasi sat at the window, watching the crowd on the public road. She thought to herself how happy were the passers by, how free the tramps, what gay characters were the hawkers in the comedy of life! And morning and evening she saw the well-groomed Mohit strutting past in the fulness of his self-conceit. To her he was a demi-god, far above the mortals she saw around her.

ouses. The scorpion is one of these, but she begins by saying a part in a very pretty courtship. Facing one another, they clasp hands, each rearing its long tail to the air; these meet overhead and gently caress one another, sometimes "roulés en gentilles volutes." Meanwhile they rub their brows together within their upturned arms. "Pour exprimer ces caresses viennent à l'esprit les termes de baisers et d'embrassements." The gods come to earth again and, still pulling one another by both hands, they wander here and there, anywhere long as they are together and alone. "Ainsi dans mon linge, le dimanche, après vêpres, la jeunesse se promène long des haies, chacun avec sa chacune."

Descending further into the segmented kingdom, Lord Avebury has told of the loves of an apterous insect, minute beneath the notice of most of us. He says:—"The male, which is much smaller than the female, runs round and round her, and they butt one another, standing face to face, and moving backwards and forwards like two playful lambs. When the female pretends to run away, and the male runs after her with a queer appearance of anger, gets in front, and stands facing her again; then she turns coyly round, and he, quicker and more active, scuttles round too, and aims to whip her with his antennae; then for a bit they stand face to face, play with their antennae, and seem to be all in all to one another." No doubt they are so. Each is face to face with the ideal, and it is thus that our progeny will become so.

Perhaps Sasi could have cheerfully spent all her life playing with her demi-god in the heaven of her fancy had not her evil star made the demi-god smile upon her and materialise the heaven within her reach. It is needless to relate at length when Mohit's covetous glance first fell upon Sasi, how he began to write to her under the false name of Binode; when the first trembling, ill-spelt reply reached him; how, at last, the whole of the poor little widow's world was turned topsy-turvy in the whirlwind of ecstatic surrender.

Late one night Sasi left her father and mother, and got into a carriage brought by Mohit, *alias* Binode. When her demi-god, with all his tinsel showing, got inside and sat close beside her, a sudden inrush of remorse bowed her to the dust. And when the carriage actually began to move, she fell at his feet, crying, "For pity's sake let me go back home." But the carriage rapidly drove away.

To narrate all the episodes of Mohit's early career would grow monotonous. This will serve as a sample.

### III.

To-day there was no one to remember the escapades of young "Binode." Mohit Datta was quite a reformed character. His reading of the sacred books was incessant; he even practised austerities.

A few days after passing sentence on Khiroda, Mohit happened to be in the gaol garden, with a view to securing some nice, fresh vegetables for his own table. He

heard from inside the gaol the sound of high words, and entering, found Khiroda in the midst of a vigorous bickering with the warder. Mohit smiled a superior smile. This is what woman is! Death at her door, and yet she must quarrel! She would dispute, thought he, amused at his conceit, even with the doorkeepers of Hades!

As he drew nearer, Khiroda, with clasped hands, addressed him, saying, "O, Mr. Judge, for mercy's sake, tell him to give me back my ring!"

On inquiry, he found that a ring had been hidden in the loops of Khiroda's hair, which the warder, discovering, had appropriated. Mohit was again amused. This desire for a bauble on the steps of the gallows! Oh, woman, woman!

"Let me see the ring," said he to the warder, who handed it over to him.

Mohit started as if it had been a piece of live coal. In the ring was set a miniature portrait on ivory of a young, headless youth. In its gold rim was engraved the name "Binode." He raised his eyes from the ring, and for the first time looked Khiroda keenly in the face. He seemed to see there the fresh, fond, tear-bedewed countenance of twenty-four years ago. But, ah! what a difference!

(Translated from the Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore.)

hospitals have in the past resolutely set their faces against any semblance of public control. Although the endowments of some of them are very considerable, they are as a matter of fact—judging by their appeals—impoverished and hampered in their work by want of funds. There can be little doubt that in the near future it will be necessary for the State to come to the help of these institutions. When this happens, the insured persons will have a natural and inalienable right of admission. In this connection the recent speech of Sir William Osler at the meeting of the Hospital Association is very encouraging to those who wish to see the Medical service under the Insurance Act linked up with our great hospitals for diagnostic and operative work.

It has been objected that dental treatment has not been included in medical benefit. Much of the dental work at one time was in the hands of the medical profession. During the last generation it has naturally become an entirely special craft, and there is an increasing stringency in the examination and registration of dentists. It would certainly be a great boon to public health if dental treatment were included under the Insurance Act; the recent work among the children in our elementary schools shows the need for early care in this respect, and one of the first extensions of medical benefit should be to include dental treatment. But this would of course involve very heavy expenditure on

Fig. 3 Tagore's short story in *The Nation*

In "The Well of the Saints" the Players were seen at their best. Mr. Arthur Sinclair (Martin Doul), Miss Sara Allgood (Mary Doul), Mr. J. A. O'Rourke (the saint), and all the company gave throughout that perfect sympathy with the author to which they alone seem to have attained. Both plays were received with every sign of enthusiasm, though it was clear that their significance was not appreciated by all

11 July, 1913

**THE GLOBE**

p4c4(DE)

### AN INDIAN PLAY AT THE COURT

Those who went to Sloane-square last evening for the first production in London of "The Post Office," by Rabindranath Tagore, expecting to be amused by the humour of sundry happenings in an Irish post-office, must have been surprised when the curtain rose to find the members of the Abbey Theatre Company in the white garments of the East, impersonating the characters in an Indian play. Play is scarcely the right name for "The Post Office," which is really a poetic and conversational fragment, with no pretence to anything approaching drama. There is something of the philosophy and illusive symbolic atmosphere of Maeterlinck in this effort of a Hindu author, something of the simple pathos of Sudermann in the final scenes of "Hannele." A child sick unto death, forbidden by the physician to run or play, sits each day at the open window and confides his dreams to the passers-by. The curdsman crying his wares, the watchman sounding his gong to remind the hearers of inexorable time, the flower gatherer, the headman of the village - these are his friends. It is they who are responsible for the suggestion that the King may send the child a letter through his newly-opened post-office. The watched-for message eventually arrives. It comes simultaneous with the appearance of the King's Herald and Physician to make ready for their master's visit. Kindly death is the name of the King, and the boy passes happily to the land of his rosiest dreams

Such a piece, in its sincerity and poetic imagining, is removed from ordinary criticism. One likes it or one does not. For ourselves we found it impressive, but thought it too tender, too ethereal a thing for the theatre. The Irish players are to be thanked, however, for bringing it to the notice of London play-goers, and commended for the simple way in which they presented it. It was difficult to reconcile the Irish accent with the darkened faces, but that, after all, was a detail. Nearly all the members of the company took part in the production, their roles giving little opportunity for histrionic display. We do not recall any previous effort of Miss Lilian Jagoe. She is an actress of singular charm, with a musical voice, and her impersonation of the young boy was beautiful in its simplicity. "The Post Office" was followed by J. M. Synge's "The Well of the Saints," in which Miss Sara Allgood and Mr. Arthur Sinclair resumed their inimitable impersonations of blind Mary and Martin Doul.

11 July, 1913

**THE STANDARD**

p5c5(W)

### INDIAN POET'S DREAM PLAY

At the Court Theatre last night the Irish Players produced a new play by Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, a pathetic fantasy entitled "The Post Office." Although the story could not be termed dramatic, it was full of cadences that charmed the ear. It is the story of a sick Indian child who sits in the house-front and speaks to passers-by of his dreams, and it ends with the departure of the child's soul "to the green hills with the red glow in them." Though staged with simplicity, the delicate poetry of the dialogue suggested scenes that could neither be pictured nor brought within the limits of a theatre. Miss Lilian Jagoe gave an almost perfect rendering of the child, and Mr. Arthur Sinclair was artistic and convincing as the man who adopted the little hero of the piece. Mr. Fred O'Donovan as the fakir who inspired the child's dreams acted with considerable insight, but Miss Eithne Magee as a flower girl was rather uncertain of the part. "The Well of the Saints," one of Synge's master-

ful creations, followed, and in their own characters the players gave their customary flawless performance.

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11 July, 1913

**THE TIMES**

p8c4(D)

## THE IRISH PLAYERS

**PLAYS BY RABINDRA NATH TAGORE  
AND J. M. SYNGE**

In Mr. Tagore's dreamy, symbolical, spiritual play, *The Post Office*, which was presented last night at the Court Theatre for the first time in London, there are two scenes. In the first, a sick boy, doomed, you feel, from the very beginning to death, sits in the window of the house of his adopted uncle looking out upon the world which he may only know at second hand. To the passers-by, the dairymen, the watchman, the headman of the village, the flower girl he talks of the life that lies beyond the house to which he is confined, passionately longing to pass out and across the mountain barrier that lies in the distance before his window. In the second scene the position is reversed. We are within the house instead of looking into it across the street. The boy is lying on his bed, no longer sitting in the window. The old desire has gone. He has learnt strange things about the world from an old fakir who sits beside him. His only wish now is to wait for a letter, a letter from the King, who has set up the new post-office down to street. And in time the letter comes, and after it the King's herald and the King's physician to prepare him for the King's coming.

It is a curious play, leaving to a certain extent a sense of incompleteness, since it ends before its climax, rich in poetical thought and imagery, as well as in a kind of symbolism that must not be pressed too closely. The King, for instance, who sets up the post-office, is presumably the King of this country. And yet, none the less surely, the coming of the King means the coming of Death. In the same way such expressions as "awfully," "jolly good," and "shut up" contrast strangely with the beauty of most of Mr. Tagore's language with-

out really seeming out of place. The part of the boy was played with much delicacy and pathos by Miss Lilian Jagoe. The other actors, though they did their best to represent Indian natives, remained always Irishmen.

*The Post Office* was followed by Synge's fine play *The Well of the Saints*, with practically the same admirable cast by whom it was given last year—Mr. Sinclair, Miss Sara Allgood, Mr. Sydney Morgan, Miss Eithne Magee, and Mr. J. A. O'Rourke as the Saint. Its symbolism is aptly complementary to the inner meaning of Mr. Tagore's play. The Indian boy was happy in that he did not, like Martin and Mary Doull, have his eyes opened to realise the cruelty of the fight for life. When they passed beyond their window all that was bad in them came into being. But he just waited for the coming of the King.

11 July, 1913

**THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**

p3c2(DE)

## ROYAL COURT THEATRE

It seemed very strange to find the Irish Company producing "The Post Office, a play in two acts, by Rabindranath Tagore." As the name of the author suggests, it is an Indian play, and it is one of those elaborate attempts to be simple and elemental which are favoured by those who by non-commercial drama mean drama that nobody would pay to see. Mr. Arthur Sinclair sat in white robes on his haunches, and talked almost inaudibly and with hardly a show of interest, about a boy he had adopted. The boy came to the window and conversed wistfully with various passers-by about meadows and dairymaids and rivers and waterfalls, and in the course of his conversations was told that the King would send him a letter. This pleased him, and he looked forward to being the King's postman, but the doctor would not let him out, for he was very ill. As he lay on his bed there came a letter which he was told was from the King; and then a herald, and the King's wreath in his hands as he fell asleep. From this I gathered that the king was Death; having, indeed, suspected it before. To the eye of faith the little piece

## Poetry.

### THE BRAHMIN.

THE sun had set on the western margin of the river among the tangle of the forest.  
The hermit boys had brought back the cattle home, and sat round the fire to listen to the master, Gautama.  
Just then a strange boy came, and greeted him with fruits and flowers, and, bowing low at his feet, spoke in a bird-like voice—"Lord, I have come to thee to be taken into the path of the supreme Truth. My name is Satyakāma."  
"Blessings be on thine head," said the master. "Of what clan art thou, my child? It is only fit for a Brahmin to aspire to the highest wisdom."  
"Master," answered the boy, "I know not of what clan I am—I will go and ask my mother."  
Thus saying, Satyakāma took leave, and wading across the shallow stream, came back to his mother's hut, which stood at the edge of the sandy waste at the end of the sleeping village.  
The lamp burned dimly in the room, and the mother stood at the door in the dark waiting for her son's return.  
She clasped him to her bosom, kissed him on his hair, and asked him of his errand to the master.  
"What is the name of my father, dear mother?" asked the boy. "It is only fit for a Brahmin to aspire to the highest wisdom, said Lord Gautama to me."  
The woman lowered her eyes, and spoke in a whisper. "In my youth I was poor, and had many masters. Thou hadst come to thy mother Jabālā's arms, my darling, who had no husband."  
The early rays of the sun glistened on the tree-tops of the forest hermitage.  
The students, with their tangled hair still wet with their morning bath, sat under the ancient tree, before the master.  
There came Satyakāma. He bowed low at the feet of the Sage, and stood silent.  
"Tell me," the great teacher asked him, "of what clan art thou?"  
"My lord," he answered, "I know it not. My mother said when I asked her, 'I had served many masters in my youth, and thou hadst come to thy mother Jabālā's arms, who had no husband.'"  
Then rose a murmur like the angry hum of bees disturbed in their hive, and the students muttered their wrath at the shameless insolence of the outcast waif.  
Master Gautama rose from his seat, stretched out his arms, took the boy to his bosom, and said, "Best of all Brahmins art thou, my child. Thou hast the noblest heritage of truth."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## Poetry.

### THE TEMPLE

WITH days of hard travail I raised a temple.  
It had no doors or windows, its walls were thickly built with massive stones.  
I forgot all else, I shunned all the world, I gazed in rapt contemplation at the image I set upon the altar.  
The night there was everlasting, lit by the lamps of perfumed oil.  
The ceaseless smoke of incense wound my heart in its heavy coils.  
Sleepless, I carved on the walls fantastic figures in mazy lines, bow-lidening winged horses, flowers with human face, women with the curving limbs of a serpent.  
No passage was left anywhere through which could enter the song of birds, the murmur of leaves or the hum of the busy village.  
The only sound that echoed in its dark dome was my own chanting of incantations.  
My mind became keen and still like a pointed flame, my senses swooned in ecstasy.  
I knew not how time passed till a thunderstone had struck the temple, and a pain stung me through my heart as it were a snake of fire.  
Suddenly a gap yawned in the stony walls, the daylight streamed in, and voices came from the world.  
The lamp became pale and ashamed.  
The carvings on the walls, like chained dreams, looked meaningless in the light, and vainly tried to find a hiding place.  
The closed walls opened in my temple.  
I looked at the image on the altar.  
I saw it smiling and alive with the living touch of God.  
The captive night spread its wings and vanished.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Fig. 4 Tagore's poems in *The Nation*  
[Left] 12 July, 1913, p. 73 [Right] 26 July, 1913, p. 647

may have its beauties, and no doubt it is a creditable attempt by an Indian gentleman to write a play. But it was all on one note and never moved one inch; and, looking back on it, I cannot remember anything said by anybody to cause it to go on even for the short time that it lasted. And what induced these Irish players to take it up I cannot guess. There were very sweet tones in the voice of Miss Lilian Jagoe, who played the boy; but beyond that, nothing. Then followed Synge's "The Well of the Saints," and Ireland was herself again. This afternoon sees a special benefit matinee of "The Eloquent Dempsy" and "Hyacinth Halvey," and for the last performance of this season, on Saturday evening, there will be "The Shadow and the Glen," "The Building Fund," and "The rising of the Moon."

J. W.

16 July, 1913

### THE ERA

p14(W)

#### "THE POST OFFICE"

Play, in two acts, by Rabindranath Tagore, Produced by the Irish Players at the Court Theatre on Thursday, July 10.

Madav ... Mr. Arthur Sinclair  
The Doctor ... Mr. J. M. Kerrigan  
Gaffer ... Mr. Fred O'Donovan  
Amal ... Miss Lilian Jagoe  
The Dairyman ... Mr. Sydney J. Morgan  
The Watchman ... Mr. H. E. Hutchinson  
The Headman .. Mr. Philip Guiry  
Sudha ... Miss Eithne Magee  
The King's Herald ... Master U. Wright  
The King's Physician ... Master J. A. O'Rourke

The Irish Players, for the last three days of their season, with the exception of Friday's benefit performance, produced Mr. Synge's "The Well of the Saints" and "The Post Office". The last-named piece, played for the first time in London on Thursday night, is an Indian play by the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, and is a simple but poetic and impressive little picture of village life in India. It is chiefly concerned with the conversations of an

imaginative delicate little boy, on whom Death has already laid his hand, with various passers-by, village traders, etc. Sitting at the window of his adopted father's house, young Amal, who knows nothing of the outside world, easily persuades the Headman, the Watchman, and Sudha, a flower girl, to talk with him, and, his mind set upon travel and adventure, the wistful little chap enthusiastically pictures what he will do when he gets well. Learning that the big building opposite is to be the King's post office, he finally declares that he will be the King's postman; and now his greatest wish is that the King shall send him a letter. The Headman of the village is apparently very indignant at his presumption, but in the last scene - Amal, lying very ill on a couch, hears of the marvels of a distant land from a fakir - the King's herald brings the letter and announces that the King will visit him in a person. Quite happy now, little Amal sinks back on his couch, and with the thrice-sounding gong of the Watchman we know that he has met the King.

This delicate and mystic little piece was admirably acted by the Irish players, Miss Lilian Jagoe giving a very impressive and pathetically beautiful portrayal of little Amal, so eager to "fly anything". Indeed, the portrait given by Miss Jagoe of the wistful, imaginative child is one that will long linger in the memory. Mr. Arthur Sinclair as Madhav, the child's adopted father, quietly indicated his love for Amal; and Mr. Fred O'Donovan, Mr. Sydney J. Morgan, and Mr. H. E. Hutchinson were excellent as the Gaffer, the Dairyman, the Watchman; Miss Eithne Magee also giving an admirable portrayal of the kindly flower girl, Sudha. The simple staging was excellent, and the impressive little piece had a most enthusiastic reception.

17 July, 1913

### THE STAGE

p20(W)

#### LONDON THEATRES THE COURT

On Thursday evening, July 10, took place the first production in London of a play, in two acts, by Rabindranath Tagore, entitled:

*The Post Office.*

Madhav . . . Mr. Arthur Sinclair  
 The Doctor . . . Mr. J. M. Kerrigan  
 Gaffer . . . Mr. Fred O'Donovan  
 Amal . . . Miss Lilian Jagoe  
 The Dairyman . . . Mr. Sydney J. Morgan  
 The Watchman . . . Mr. H. E. Hutchinson  
 The Headman . . . Mr. Philip Guiry  
 Sudha . . . Miss Eithne Magee  
 The King's Herald . . . Mr. U. Wright  
 The King's Physician . . . Mr. J. A. O'Rourke

Act One - Outside Madhav's House.

Act Two - Inside Madhav's House.

Produced by Mr. Lenox Robinson.

Having this season made a not too successful incursion into the domain of classic French comedy, the Irish Players turned their attention to an Indian play during the sixth and closing week of their stay this summer at the Court, giving three week-end performances of a piece from the pen of the distinguished Indian poet, dramatist, and lecturer, Rabindranath Tagore, whose varied writings have attracted much comment under notice, alike imaginative and prosaic in idea and working out, and similar poetic and queerly colloquial of diction, was *The Post Office* which was given, we believe, in Dublin by the second Abbey company a few months ago. It might seem difficult to obtain anything to charm one to a tear from the mere opening of a new Post Office in an Indian village, and yet this is what Rabindranath Tagore has done in setting forth the last fancies and hours of an orphan child adopted by his uncle Madhav, a character in which Mr. Sinclair's brogue, even if softened down somewhat for the occasion, contrasted oddly with that popular comedian's wearing of a pale yellow pugree and flowing, white draperies. As regards the setting - for the sweet simplicity of which the producer Mr. Lenox Robinson, must be praised - it consisted merely of a screen or framework, with backing of contrasted hue. Thus, the exterior of Madhav's house was shown as white, with jet-black background, and the interior as a crimson colour, with deep green to represent the

opening beyond. Further than the often-curtained windows, poor, little, ailing Amal, adopted and much beloved by Madhav, who had married the sister of the lad's father, is, by the imperative orders of a native doctor, not allowed to pass; but in his mind's eye, the dying boy sees again or revisits all sorts of places or countries, real or imaginary, besides the distant hills that seem to hold their arms up to him, and about these he holds conversations with various kindly souls who pass by his window or come to talk with him indoors. Among them are a curd-vending Dairyman, played capably by Mr. Sydney Morgan, the Watchman of Mr. Hutchinson, a Flower-girl, represented by Miss Eithne Magee, a rhapsodical Fakir, quaintly embodied by Mr. Fred O'Donovan, and the pompous and conceited headman of the place, made comically imposing figure by Mr. Philip Guiry, in red head-dress and tunic, and bearing a green umbrella. It is the last-named who jestingly starts the theory that perhaps the King (a term used both literally and symbolically) may perhaps send the boy a letter all for himself from the new Post Office facing the house. The Headman, indeed, tries to translate his jest into reality, but, after he has delivered a semi-bogus missive to the poor child, there appear the King's Herald and physician, really the messengers and harbingers of Death, to afford some little consolation to Amal, whose imaginative vision thus becomes heightened or intensified in his dying moments. These personages were embodied with a fair amount of effect by Mr. U. Wright and Mr. J. A. O'Rourke. Mr. J. M. Kerrigan acted capably as the Doctor. As for the Amal of Miss Lilian Jagoe, it was tearfully wistful and delicately fanciful and poetical impersonation, bringing out in large measure the charm of the character as drawn and designed by the author. It seemed to be enjoyed particularly by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who on Thursday was present with Mrs. Birrell in the box. The *Post Office* was followed by J. M. Synge's *The Well of the Saints*, which has been in the repertory of the Irish Players since 1905. In this the quarrelling old blind couple, Martin and merry Dougl, were represented vigorously by Mr. Sinclair and Miss Sara Allgood, Mr. O'Rourke appearing as a Saint.

## Poetry.

## THE TRYST.

## I

UPAGUPTA, the disciple of Buddha, lay asleep on the dust  
by the city wall of Mathura.  
Lamps were all out, doors were shut in the town,  
and stars were hidden in clouds in the murky sky of  
August.  
Whose feet were those tinkling with anklets, touching  
his breast of a sudden?  
He woke up starting, and the rude light from the  
woman's lamp struck his forgiving eyes.  
It was the dancing girl, drunk with the wine of her youth,  
starred with jewels, and clouded with a pale-blue  
mantle.  
She lowered her lamp and saw the young face, austere  
beautiful.  
"Forgive me, young ascetic," said the woman, "graciously  
come to my house. The dusty earth is not a  
fit bed for you."  
The ascetic answered, "Go on your way, fair woman.  
When the time is ripe I will come and see you."  
Suddenly, the black night showed its teeth in a flash of  
lightning.  
The storm growled from the corner of the sky, and the  
woman trembled in fear.

## II

The new year had not begun yet.  
The wind was wild. The branches of the wayside trees  
were aching with blossoms.  
Gay notes of the flute came floating in the warm spring  
air from afar.  
The citizens had gone to the woods, to the festival of  
flowers.  
From the mid-sky smiled the full moon on the shadows  
of the silent town.  
The young ascetic was walking in the lonely city road,  
while overhead the lovesick *kuchis* urged from the  
mango branches their sleepless plaints.  
Upagupta passed through the city gates, and stood at  
the base of the rampart.  
What woman was it lying on the earth in the shadow of  
the wall at his feet?  
Struck with the black pestilence, her body spotted with  
sores, she was driven away from the town with haste  
for fear of her fatal touch.  
The ascetic sat by her side, taking her head on his knees,  
and moistened her lips with water and smeared her  
body with balm.  
"Who are you, kind angel of mercy?" asked the  
woman.  
"The time, at last, has come for me to visit you, and I  
have come," replied the young ascetic.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## Poetry.

## KABIR AND THE WOMAN.

THE rumor spread all around the country that Kabir was  
a man of God. People flocked to his door.  
The sick asked him for cures; the barren women begged  
for the blessing of children, some challenged him to  
show mystic power, some wanted him to prove that  
God is.  
Kabir raised his hands to his God and cried, "By your  
mercy I was born a weaver in a humble home. But  
what game is this you are playing; gathering all the  
crowd at my door to leave me yourself!"  
When Brahmins saw the people worshipping him, a man  
of low birth and occupation, they burned with rage.  
With a woman of evil repute they took counsel, and they  
bought her over to their plan.  
It was the market day. Kabir came to sell his cloths.  
The woman rushed to him, and caught his hand. She  
cried, with tears in her eyes—"Faithless one, why  
desert me and break my heart!"  
"Out with you, impostor!" exclaimed the jeering crowd  
of Brahmins, "You play the saint to delude men,  
and leave this poor woman to starve!"  
"Yes," said Kabir, "I am to blame. Why should she  
go without food when there is enough for me!"  
He welcomed the woman to his home, and said, "Surely,  
my lord has heard my prayer."  
A sudden fear possessed the woman.  
She fell upon her knees and cried, "I have sinned against  
you. Your curse will be my death."  
"You are forgiven," said Kabir, "live with me without  
fear."  
Days passed, and her heart became sweet and her  
thoughts pure. Her voice rang in praise of her dear  
lord. And Kabir was forsaken of men.  
One day the king, in a fit of idle fancy, said he must  
hear Kabir sing.  
The poet shook his head, and said to the man from the  
court "I am not fit for a king's audience."  
"I dare not go back without you," said the royal  
servant.  
The king sat on his throne, and his nobles and courtiers  
sat round him.  
Kabir entered the hall, the woman following him.  
Some smiled and others frowned. The king thought,  
"What shamelessness to come before me with a  
woman!"  
At his signal the guard took them out.  
He was hailed by loud laughter from the Brahmins, who  
were waiting in the street.  
It pierced the woman's heart. She fell at Kabir's feet,  
and said, weeping, "You lifted me out of the mud  
to besmirch your own fair name!"  
"You are the gift of my lord," said Kabir, "my crown  
of humiliation."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Fig. 5 Tagore's poems in *The Nation*

[Left] 9 August, 1913, p718 [Right] 23 August, 1913, p784

September 6, 1913]

THE NATION.

849

Bulwer Lytton if he would discover the virtues of Victorian criticism

Critics have, I suspect, always "permitted themselves to be used as ill paid assistants of the advertising manager or his equivalent. Readers have always been 'the slaves of fashion'." And I deny absolutely that the real writers of to-day abuse their talent before a voracious but ill-educated mob

The circulating libraries! Yes That is another question! It is certainly not the fault of the libraries that English fiction is in the fine healthy condition that it presents at this moment.—Yours, &c.,

HUGH WALPOLE

Polperro, Cornwall  
September 3rd, 1913

## A RAILWAY TO THE CRYSTAL PALACE

To the Editor of THE NATION

SIR,—Will you allow me to state, through THE NATION, that the proposed railway between the Crystal Palace and the Strand will link London and the business offices of the Dominions to the "life and soul of the nation," soon to be exemplified at Sydenham, from medievalism to modern triumph, realistic and alive

The glittering domes, as seen from Aldwych, suggest a vista down, struggling to radiate "an Imperial highway," connecting the Palace and grounds of Empire to the Metropolis and the world's commerce

Based upon the Home and Dominion Governments accepting this estate as a British heritage, it will act as a stimulating air-shaft to the environs of London and the country at large

A working "Empire Model" as an engine of progress, will generate an atmosphere of confidence, a popular breeze, and trade currents for the "business Dreadnought in the Strand."

The Commonwealth building plans resemble the bows of a great vessel, and when Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand are added, including India the Colonial Office, and the Board of Trade, absorbing the Gaiety Theatre and adjacent premises, it will represent, in shape and meaning, "a ship of State, heading towards the new harbor" and the trade of the world

The Crystal Palace, as the "lighthouse of the nation," sending its search-rays around the coasts of commerce, will assist the captains of industry to pilot the crafts of prosperity to the homes of the people, bridging industrial conflicts, promoting rural enterprises, and agricultural interests, finding new markets, and youth a trade! Bringing manufacturer and merchant together, promoting love of country, and pride of race! A seat of international goodwill, sports centre, and public entertainment

The Overseas are willing and waiting Greater London's united action and the bulwark support of the entire kingdom—Yours, &c.

W. A. RAYST

Woodford Green, September 1st, 1913

## Poetry.

## POEMS OF LIFE AND DEATH

## I.—L'UNION

ICHLUIDAS, the poet, as was his custom, was wandering, deep in thought, by the Ganges, in that lonely spot where they burn their dead

He found a woman sitting at the feet of the corpse of her dead husband, gaily dressed as for wedding  
She rose as she saw him, bowed to him and said, "Permit me, master, with your blessings, to follow my husband to heaven"

"Why such hurry, my daughter!" asked Tulsī: "Is not this earth also His who made heaven?"  
"For heaven I do not hanker," said the woman: "I wait my husband"

Tulsī smiled and said to her, "Go back to your home—my child. Before the month is over you will find your husband"

The woman went back with glad hope. Tulsī came to her every day and gave her high thoughts to think till her heart was filled to the brim with love divine  
When the month was scarcely over, her neighbors came to her asking, "Woman, have you found your husband?"

The widow smiled and said, "I have"

Eagerly they asked, "Where is he?"

"In my heart is my lord, one with me," said the woman

## II.—THE DOOMEN

You had your rudder broken many a time, my boat, and your sails torn to shreds,

Often had you drifted towards the sea, dragging anchor and headed not,

But now there has spread a crack in your hull and you hold is heavy with salt water

Now is the time for you to end your voyage and take your rest, to be rocked into sleep by the lapping of the water by the beach

Alas, I know all warning is vain

You reck not wise advice, my foolish boat

The veiled face of dark doom lures you

The madness of the storm and the waves is upon you

The music of the tide is rising high. You are shaken by the fever of dance

Break, break your chain, my boat, and be free, and fearlessly rush to your wreck

## III.—THE WOMAN

THE battle is over. After strife and struggles, the treasure is gathered and stored

Come now, woman, with your golden jar of beauty

Wash away all dust and dirt, fill up all cracks and flaws, make the heap shapely and sound,

Come, beautiful woman, with the golden jar on your head!

The play is over. I have come to the village, and have set up my hearth stone

Now come, woman, carrying your vessel of sacred water with tranquil smile and devout love, make my home pure

Come, noble woman, with your vessel of sacred water

The morning is over. The sun is fiercely burning. The wandering stranger is seeking shelter

Come, woman, with your full pitcher of sweetness—open your door, and with a garland of welcome ask him in

Come, blissful woman, with your full pitcher of sweetness

The day is over. The time has come to take leave

Come, O woman, with your vessel full of tears! Let your sad eyes shed a tender twilight glow on the farewell path, and the touch of your trembling hand make the parting hour full

Come, sad woman, with your vessel of tears

The night is dark, the house is desolate and the hearth empty, only the lamp for the last rites is burning

Come, woman, bring your brimming jar of remembrance

Open the door of the secret chamber with your unbraided hair and spotless white robe, replenish the lamp of worship

Come, suffering woman, bring your brimming jar of remembrance

## IV.—AT THE DAY'S END

THE current of my life stream ran rapid and strong when I was young

The spring breeze was thriftless, the trees were aflame with flowers, and the birds had no sleep for their songs

I passed through them with a giddy speed, carried away by a flood of passion—I had no time to see and feel and take them into my being

Now that youth has ebbed and I am stranded on the bank I can hear the deep music of all things the blended perfume of the woodlands comes wafted to me through the gentle evening air, and the sky opens its heart to me with all its stars

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

13 September, 1913

**THE NATION**

p882(W)

**Section : THE WORLD OF BOOKS**

There is not much new poetry spoken of yet, but Mr. Rabindranath Tagore's two volumes, "The Gardener" and "The Crescent Moon", which Messrs. Macmillan are bringing out, are likely to increase his already great reputation. We know nothing that Mr. Tagore has yet published to compare in beauty with some of the poems in the latter book, which is made up of exquisite lyrics of childhood. The revival of mysticism, of which the popularity of Mr. Tagore is but one symptom, makes opportune the appearance of the collected edition of the poems of that fine Irish mystic, "A. E.", which the same publishers have in preparation. Mr. Kipling's "Songs from Books" (Macmillan), which contains the various poems scattered through his prose, except in the "Jungle Books", will afford compensating excitements to those readers whom the wave of mysticism has not yet engulfed.

13 September, 1913

**THE SPECTATOR**

p387-388(W)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE AS  
A STORY TELLER**

MR. SEN's command of vernacular English has hidden from him the extraordinary difficulty of finding an equivalent in our language for Mr. Tagore's artlessly artful style. In his preface Mr. Sen compares Mr. Tagore's stories to the work in this sort of Guy de Maupassant and Chateauriand. A nearer approximation in both matter and style might be suggested to the tales of Alphonse Daudet, since Mr. Tagore's delightful *galpas* are in the difficult *genre* (difficult above all for the translator) of a *La Chevre de M. Seguin* or *Le Petite Dauphin*. The quality of Mr. Sen's English may be easily judged from the briefest sample taken quite at random from any part of his version. For instance, "It is not possible to bear so much of reminders in

respect to the petty dole of very coarse indigestible rice twice a day!" This is the exclamation of a prodigal younger brother who lives repentant his petulance in the most tragic fashion. But the practised reader should be able to make a fresh translation mentally as he reads, and if he can achieve something like, say, the style of R. L. Stevenson's "Pavilion on the Links", he may understand why in Bengal Mr. Tagore's fame as a novelist and story-teller falls little short of his popularity as a poet. The effort is worth making, since it may serve to show that the spread of English in India has not necessarily helped reciprocal understanding.

Mr. Sen's courageous attempt is not wholly unsuccessful. There are even passages where his manner of speech gives an exotic flavour which is pleasant enough to an indulgent reader. But such tales as "Uddhar" and "Kabulwalla" still await a competent translator. As, however, such a translator is far to seek, Mr. Sen's version is worth reading, if it is read with a due sense of the difficulty which he has partly overcome.\*

12 October, 1913

**THE OBSERVER**

p43(S)

**SECTION : BOOKS OF THE DAY****LIFE AND THE POET**

**MONOLOGUES:** By Richard Middleton (Fisher Unwin). 5s. net.

**THE GARDENER:** By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan,) 4s. 6d. net.

**THE DARK FLOWER:** By John Galsworthy. (Heinemann) 6s.

**Mr. Tagore**

On this subject Mr. Tagore has written in his new book, "The Gardener," a far-seeing little poem.-

\* Glimpses of Bengal Life, translated from the Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore. By Rajani Ranjan Sen, B.A., B.L. London Luzac and Co. (3s. net.)

## Poetry.

### POEMS OF SOLITUDE.

#### NIGHT.

MAKE me thy poet, O Night, veiled Night!  
 Let me voice the song of those who for ages have sat,  
 speechless, in thy shadows  
 Take me up on thy chariot that, without wheels, runs  
 noiselessly from world to world, thou Queen of the  
 Palace of Time, thou darkly beautiful.  
 Many a questioning mind has stealthily entered thy  
 courtyard and roamed through thy lampless mansion  
 in search of some answer.  
 From many a heart, pierced with the arrow of joy sped by  
 the hands of the unknown, sudden glad chants have  
 burst forth, shaking the darkness to its foundation.  
 Sitting in the starlight, wakeful solitary souls gaze in  
 wonder at the treasure they have won  
 Make me their poet, O Night! the poet of thy fathomless  
 silence!

#### ALONE.

If there is none who comes when you call, walk alone  
 If there is none who speaks, and they turn aside their  
 pale faces, bare your heart and speak alone.  
 If there is none to share your journey, and they all leave  
 you and go, tread upon the thorns of your path and  
 bleed alone.  
 If there is none to light the lamp in the stormy night, and  
 they shut their doors against you, light your own  
 heart with thunderflame, and burn alone.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

## Poetry.

#### A CALL.

Ah, woman! leave your basket full of wares, your burden  
 is heavy, and your limbs are tired.  
 For what distant town have you set out, with what  
 hungry hope of profit?  
 The way is long before you, and the dust is hot in the  
 sun  
 Ah, woman! leave your basket full of wares, and listen  
 to me

See the lake here is deep and full, its water dark like a  
 crow's eyes.  
 The banks are sloping and tender with grass, the landing  
 stairs are of white stone.  
 The shadow of the mango grove at the water's edge is  
 cool.  
 Ah, woman! leave your basket full of wares, and spread  
 your skirt on the lonely grass.

Dip your tired feet into the water, and idly weave a  
 little chain with wild flowers.  
 The noontide wind will gently pass its caressing fingers  
 through your hair, the pigeons will croon to you  
 their song of sleep; the rustling leaves will murmur  
 to your ears the secrets that nestle in the shadows  
 Your eyelids will droop over your eyes, your veil will  
 slip from off your face.  
 O, woman! leave your basket full of wares!

What harm if the hours pass by and the sun sets; if the  
 way through the desolate land be lost in the waning  
 light!  
 Yonder is my house, by the hedge of the henna; I will  
 guide you there.  
 It will be a moonless night, and if you are afraid I will  
 hold you by the hand.  
 I will spread a bed for you, and light a lamp; and when  
 in the morning the birds are roused in their nest by  
 the stir at milking the cows, I will waken you.  
 O, woman! leave your basket full of wares, for enough  
 is at hand. Lay your burden down and rest.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Fig. 7 Tagore's poems in *The Nation*  
 [Left] 20 September, 1913, p916 [Right] 4 October, 1913, p21

"I remember a day in my childhood I floated a paper boat in the ditch.

"It was a wet day of July, I was alone and happy over my play I floated my paper boat in the ditch.

"Suddenly the storm clouds thickened, winds came in gusts and rain poured in torrents. Rills of muddy water rushed and swelled the stream and sunk my boat. Bitterly I thought in my mind that the storm came on purpose to spoil my happiness, all its malice was against me.

"The cloudy day of July is long to-day and I have been musing over all those games in life wherein I was loser. I was blaming my fate for the many tricks it played on me when suddenly I remembered the paper boat that sank in the ditch"

The little poem illustrates the peculiar quality of Mr. Tagore's work. He does not in his poetry set the themes of life to great music; he speaks them in a soft voice to the heart with all the simplicity and directness in his power. He takes the little intimate things which comprise life and fashions them into pearls which reflect the colour of the sky, the mightiness of love and life. He has vision: he has intelligence in love, that last test of a man's nature:

"I hold her hands, and press her to my breast  
Ah, but where is it? Who can strain the blue from the sky?"

"I try to grasp the beauty: it eludes me, leaving only the body in my hands

"Baffled and weary, I come back

"How can the body touch the flower which only the spirit may touch?"

Every lover knows this to be the simple truth: that the spirit and body of a man may not be separated in love — in that love which appeared to the man who walked with Life and Death "and made them on each side a shadow seem" as distinct from that prevalent grotesque of love which is but a boldly uneasiness sanctified.

14 October, 1913

**PALL MALL GAZETTE**

p7c4(DE)

## UNDER THE BANYAN

**"THE GARDENER" BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE (MACMILLAN). 4s. 6d. net.**

Eulogy is repaid by a dedication in Mr. Tagore's latest book of verse. Mr. Yeats has the honour of having introduced the Bengali poet to Western readers, but he puts into a certain speech some months ago a strain of praise so lofty that it would be almost a miracle to deserve and to sustain it. The miracle is not yet. The present book of love lyrics is less mature and less profound than the spiritual poems in "Gitanjali," and reduces itself to two main elements — a frank simplicity of feeling couched in honeyed fancies and caresses. But the simplicity is marred by a too frequent use of the refrain, and the honeyed flavour of the diction grows monotonous. We make allowance for the languors of the East, but we ask for its ardours as well, and the occasions are few when the poet revels under the narcotics of passion and summons back his manhood. This is one instance, in a lyric complete in itself:

Free me from the bonds of your sweetness, my love! No more of this wine of kisses

This mist of heavy incense stifles my heart. Open the doors, make room for the morning light

I am lost in you, wrapped in the folds of your caresses

Free me from your spells, and give me back the manhood to offer you my freed heart

The refrain is absent here, so the verse agrees in form with the thought it embodies. It is also free from certain crudities which a self-translator into English is bound to incur unless he submits to advice and correction. "Raddle" almost requires a footnote, for though, like most provincialisms, it is sound English, few people in this part of the kingdom know that it means the red ochre that smartens up a flagged cottage floor after cleaning. "Cowshed," on the other hand, comes near to bathos, and "fists" is very little better, especially when applied to the

hands of the adored one. Unless he uses the figures of the garden and the grove, we like Mr. Tagore best when he forsakes these touches of semi-realism and expresses sentiment or irony alone, as in this fable of soul and body:-

Then love is intense with longing, but they never  
can fly wing to wing

Through the bars of the cage they look, and vain  
is their wish to know each other

They flutter their wings in yearning, and sing,  
"Come closer, my love!"

The free bird cries, "It cannot be, I fear the  
closed doors of the cage."

The cage bird whispers, "Alas! my wings are power-  
less and dead."

The best attempts in the direction of variety are a playful bit of verse describing the peep of a passing damsel through her veil - it almost reminds one of the window poem in Locker-Lampson's "London Lyrics" - and another in the strain of Omar. Beginning, "O mad, superbly drunk," it threads together a number of axioms in the manner of the Book of Proverbs, and concludes:

I let go my pride of learning and judgment of  
right and wrong

I'll shatter my memory's vessel scattering the  
last drop of tears

With the foam of the berry-red wine I will bathe  
and brighten my laughter

The badge of the civil and staid I'll tear into  
shreds for the nonce

I'll take the holy vow to be worthless, to be drunken  
and go to the dogs

The reader will note the hexameters in the last three lines, and indeed the echo of metre haunts many passages in spite of the poet's resolute search for a prose equivalent. We should like to quote a delicious bit of characterisation of womanhood in its wilful and coquettish insincerity (xxxvi), as also an imaginative statement of love's mutual tyranny (xxxiii), but we have given enough to show the quality of the book. No one can read it without a sense of the original music in his ear, and we have a very genuine curiosity to hear Mr. Tagore recite the authentic Bengali versions which he has ren-

dered himself so delicately in this fresh and truly poetic book.

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16 October, 1913

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c2(D)

### THE GARDENER

**By Rabindranath Tagore, translated by the Author from the original Bengali. 4s. 6d. net. London : Macmillan & Co.**

Even were this remarkable little book less sound in essentials of fine literature than it is, it would still be noteworthy as a work of admirable English written by an Indian. It is a translation in prose of a collection of "Lyrics of Love and Life", originally composed by the translator in Bengali, and the rendering has a dignity, a poetic quality, that many an English author might naturally envy, and that makes the dedication of the work, "To W B Yeats", not inappropriate. The poems themselves sing the progress of a passionate love affair, and do so with exaltation, a dreaminess and in its feeling. They cannot fail to elicit a hearty interest and admiration among lovers of poetry sensitive of the peculiar charm of the Oriental imagination, and to add to the number of the admirers of the author, who recently sprang into fame in the country with publication of his "Gitanjali".

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25 October, 1913

**THE NATION**

p182-183(W)

### "RABINDRANATH"

**"The Gardener."** By RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.)

The highest literature of one country is always partially shut to another. There is something about literature that cannot be fully communicated except to people of the poet's own race. Generations

of his people have all passed into the poet's heart, and he has been suckled on the blood of forgotten ancestry. Even his words can be understood by no foreigner, for round each word has gathered a cluster of invisible associations and secondary intentions that only the ear of his own race can ever perceive. That is why no translation of poetry is ever possible, and in approaching Tagore's own English prose versions of his Bengali lyrics we must remember that neither was he born to English, nor can we ever hope to realise the sense of joy and worship which comes over the Bengali when he hears the name of "Rabindranath."

But still, long famous in his own country, he has lately become famous among us foreigners as well - among those of us, at least, who can regard India as something more than a market for cotton goods or an eligible relief-work for sons from the public schools. And he has justly won his fame from the beautiful English versions he has given us. We suppose no poet ever more genuinely detested or more patiently endured fame's usual accompaniments in England and America - the lionising of evening parties, the curiosity of afternoon teas, the chattering peep-shows of divine mysteries. During his recent residence in London, it was a lesson in irony to watch his meditative figure and the face as harmless as a dove while he sat in unruffled silence among the flickering tongues of distinguished people who had never meditated in their lives, but, no doubt, combined with the wisdom of the serpent with its other qualities. When addressed, he would answer courteously in a gentle voice that will be better heard in Heaven than in London, and then again would sit in unruffled silence, letting time roll on, for time brings all things to an end. So now the stream of time has borne him back to his own country, and, for the salvation of his own spirit, it was none too soon.

In the present volume, the portrait, drawn by another of the same family of genius, shows him as a boy of sixteen, just as Mr. William Rothenstein's beautiful drawing in "Gitanjali" showed him in mature manhood. And the poems are younger too. We should suppose they were chiefly composed between twenty and thirty-five. They are less philosophic than the "Gitanjali," less capable of a purely spiritual interpretation.

Most of them, in fact, are love poems, and there is no need to sublimate them into allegories of the soul. There is a frame of mind that cannot rest content with the "Vita Nuova" until it is transformed into a theological treatise, and that kind of mind will, no doubt, set to work upon this volume of Rabindranath in the same sanctifying spirit. The task would not be difficult. We can only repeat that it is unnecessary. The spiritual intention is not inevitable and obvious, as it was in much of the "Gitanjali." Even of these Mr. Yeats wrote:

"These verses will not lie in little, well-printed books upon ladies' tables, who turn the pages with indolent hands that they may sigh over a life without meaning, which is yet all they can know of life, or be carried about by students at the University to be laid aside when the work of life begins, but as the generations pass, travellers will hum them on the highway and men rowing upon rivers."

That may be true of India, though we fear the British bargee will never hum anything of the kind. But if it was true of the "Gitanjali," it is much more likely to be true of this volume, in which the appeal is usually much more direct and human. Rather strangely, the poems often remind us of the so-called "Song of Solomon" (for which also sanctity has discovered a theological interpretation). They are hard to illustrate, because each ought to be quoted whole, and they are often just too long. In many there is a recurrent refrain, as in the four verses of Number 16. Unhappily, we can quote only the second and third verses:

"Your veil of the saffron colour makes my eyes  
drunk

The jasmine wreath that you wove me thrills to  
my heart like praise

It is a game of giving and withholding, revealing  
and screening again, some smiles and some little  
shyness, and some sweet, useless struggles

This love between you and me is simple as a  
song

No mystery beyond the present, no striving for  
the impossible; no shadow behind the charm, no  
groping in the depth of the dark,

This love between you and me is simple as a  
song."

Yes; one can just imagine a boatman on the Brahmapootra singing that. Or even the following, which we quote complete

"When she passed by me with quick steps, the end of her skirt touched me

From the unknown island of a heart came a sudden, warm breath of spring

A flutter of a flitting touch brushed me and vanished in a moment, like a torn flower petal blown in the breeze

It fell upon my heart like a sigh of her body and whisper of her heart "

But even an Indian boatman would hardly sing this, in spite of all its lamentable truth:

"I hold her hands and press her to my breast

I try to fill my arms with her loveliness, to plunder her sweet smile with kisses, to drink her dark glances with my eyes.

Ah, but, where is it? Who can strain the blue from the sky?

I try to grasp the beauty, it eludes me, leaving only the body in my hands

Baffled and weary, I came back. How can the body touch the flower which only the spirit may touch?"

In that, even more than in the others, one feels that the poet is struggling to express himself in a foreign language. One envies those who were nurtured in the same language as himself. But how true is the thought that is trying to reveal itself in those words! How common and how baffling is the emotion!

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27 October, 1913

**THE DAILY NEWS AND LEADER**  
p4c4.D:

**Section : LITERATURE**

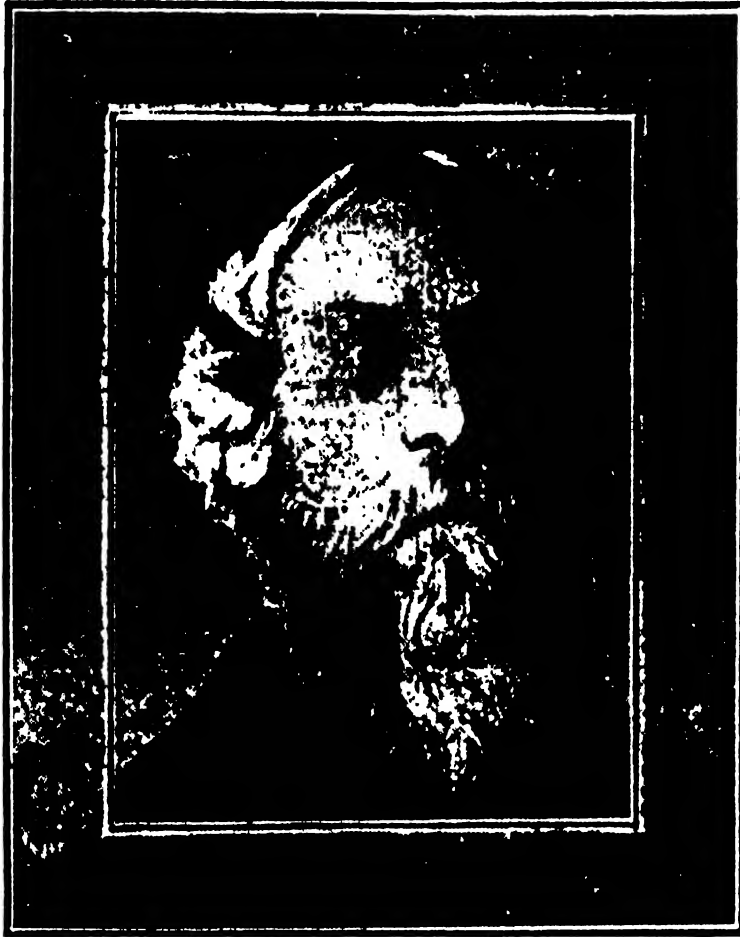
**A BOOK OF THE DAY**

**MR. TAGORE'S POETRY**  
**(BY R. ELLIS ROBERTS)**

**"The Gardener" by Rabindranath Tagore.**  
**MacMillan. 4s. 6d. net.**

Nothing has vitiated English judgment on Oriental art and literature so much as the detestable habit of regarding people of the East as essentially different beings from ourselves. It is still possible for a novelist to attain a popular success by writing of the Chinese as if they were a kind of malicious white ant, instead of a crowd of normal human beings. In America this outrageous sentiment has terrible consequences - wholesale murders and persecutions of negroes and Chinese. We still wring shocked hands over the mediaeval treatment of Jews, whereas the Anglo-Saxon behaves with little sympathy to nearly all alien races that are not definitely European. This unjust view of the Asiatic or African has produced a corresponding error in those who endeavour to secure righteous dealing for the Oriental. The value of things Oriental exaggerated, or, rather, it is insisted that their value is of a different kind from that of Western things. Every son of India, or China, or Japan is hailed as though his nationality endowed him with a mysticism and a sense of the unseen denied to the Western. People forget the fact that all the greatest mystics from Erigena to St. Theresa, have been Westerners, that there is nothing in any Eastern nation to correspond with the depth and intensity of the body of Christian mysticism.

India has suffered particularly since the ill-advised enthusiasm of Max Muller, from the habit of regarding every Indian peasant as a yogi. Neither in art nor letters does India differ essentially from Europe, except that, neither in art nor letters, has it ever reached the perfection which Europe attained in Dante or Chaucer, Goethe or Cervantes.



RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

[Photo by courtesy of "Review of Reviews."]

Fig. 8 *The Daily News & Leader*  
27 October, 1913, p4

Rembrandt or Michael Angelo. The recent craze for Mr. Tagore's poetry is an admirable instance of the evil. People who know nothing of Indian religion greeted Mr. Tagore as typical of the Hindu religious spirit; it was probably the same folk who, in commenting on a recent Indian royal wedding, announced solemnly that the bride had become a Brahmin. Those of us who felt from "Gitanjali" that Mr. Tagore's genius was strictly individual, and his inspiration derived from Western rather than Eastern sources - as would only be natural in one born into the Brahmo-Somaj - are fully justified by this new volume.

### The Influence of Keats

"The Gardener" contains work mostly earlier than the poems in "Gitanjali." It is a collection of love-poems, and what influences it betrays are distinctly Western [sic.]. Here one can discern Keats, and here Swinburne - and in an occasional vagueness - a vagueness altogether alien to true mysticism - Mr. Tagore recalls Shelley. I hasten to say that I have no idea whether Mr. Tagore knew any of those poets before he wrote "The Gardener." It is merely that the poems recall them and Rossetti, rather than the Psalms or the Canticles or even such a

beautiful love-poem as the tale of Savitri and Satyavan in the "Mahabharata". Take for instance, those two poems on Woman:

O woman, you are not merely the handiwork of God, but also of men, these are ever-endowing you with beauty from their hearts.

Poets are weaving for you a web with threads of golden imagery, painters are giving your form ever new immortality

The sea gives its pearls, the mines their gold, the summer gardens their flowers to deck you, to cover you, to make you more precious

The desire of men's hearts has shed its glory over your youth.

You are one-half woman and one-half dream.

That in its rather strained sentiment, its deliberately decadent view of woman, as an opportunity for decoration, is modern in idea and expression; it recalls not perhaps Keats so much as Verlaine. The same note is repeated in:

With a glance of your eyes you could plunder all the wealth of songs struck from poets' harps, fair woman!

But for their praises you have no ear, therefore I come to praise you

You could humble at your feet the proudest heads in the world

But it is your loved ones, unknown to fame, whom you choose to worship, therefore I worship you.

The perfection of your arms would add glory to kingly splendour with their touch

But you use them to sweep away the dust, and to make clean your humble home, therefore I am filled with awe

The false sentiment in that is a thing which we had hoped was entirely a civilised and European product. It recalls the worst flights of mid-Victorian sentiment about women, inspiration, and least indirectly, from some stray poems of Austin's or Buchanan's.

There are, however, many things in "The Gardener" which even in the somewhat literary English Mr. Tagore uses are singularly beautiful. You find splendid phrases, as in the invitation to the Lake:

It is cool and fathomlessly deep.

It is dark like a sleep that is dreamless

There in its depths nights and days are, and songs are silence

In a passionate love-song, recalling both Sappho and Catullus's rendering of Sappho, there is a beautiful image:

When I sit on my balcony and listen for his foot-steps, leaves do not rustle on the trees, and the water is still in the river like the sword on the knees of a sentry fallen asleep

And in the poem which echoes the old cry of the youthful pessimist from Solomon to Swinburne - nothing lives for ever, brother, and nothing lasts for long. Keep that in mind and rejoice we find another exquisite phrase:

The hours trip rapidly away, hiding their dreams in their skirts

Mr. Tagore's gift indeed essentially a pictorial, and not an intellectual nor a spiritual one. He has a keen and true eye both for colour and form, but there is no sign of any deep thought, or of any but the ordinary young man's ideas about love and God, either in this book or in "Gitanyali". It would be a thousand pities if the real charm of Mr. Tagore's work were forgotten in the clamour raised about his far more problematical claim to be a philosopher or a mystic. He is known in Bengal chiefly as a love-poet, and there is no doubt that the verses in this book are far finer and more genuine than even the best in "Gitanyali". He deals here with concrete and definite things, and he has the eye which Keats had, or Gautier, for the visible, tangible world. For that we welcome him. Our own poets, following those two Irishmen of genius, A. E. and Mr. Yeats, have gone too much astray after the star they have seen in the West, and here from India we have a poet whose real gift is the possession of those qualities which Milton declared to be necessary for poetry. Mr. Tagore is not always quite so simple as he is sensuous and passionate; but his best poems are direct, singularly untroubled by thought, and not overburdened with diagnosed experience. Although his expression

is occasionally obscure, he takes himself and his feeling quite naturally and simply. For those - for we believe there are young men and women who only read Georgian poetry - who do not know Keats, we would suggest that the nearest parallel to Mr. Tagore's work is the poetry of Mr. W. H. Davies. That he should lack Mr. Davies's charm of form is inevitable, but no doubt in Bengali these songs of women and children and animals have all the rhythm which we can only guess at, as we read them in their English garb.

29 October, 1913

### THE DAILY MAIL

p6c5(D)

#### A GREAT MAN FROM BENGAL by F. ASHWORTH BRIGGS

There is a great man in Bengal. His name is Rabindranath Tagore. He is a lover of mankind and a star in the firmament of the poets. The English people will welcome him with open arms when they know him better. He is inspired, like Carlyle's heroes.

I remember no one whose work has given me more delight, refreshment, and surprise. One met him first in little lyrics in English periodicals. Then came the beautiful volume exquisite combination of poetry, philosophy, and adoration. Now we are given "The Gardener,"\* with flowers as fresh as sunrise. And the poet, at the age of fifty-two, will find his fame shining in the West as it has long shone in the East. It is something new in our Imperial history to get great literature in our own tongue from the East. Mr. Tagore's originals were, of course, in Bengali. He has translated them into rhythmical English prose. One cannot tell what they have lost in the translation, but as they stand they are of extreme beauty. And they shatter an illusion. Mr. Kipling and memories of the mutiny have left in the English mind a strange impression of India - an effect of harsh, bright colours, vast spaces, hardness and treachery, suttee, bombs and plague. The Englishman travelling in India

feels a vast gulf between white and brown. The poet bridges it. No one who reads him will be able to think of India in the same light as before. They say these are the songs the natives sing with those strange rhythms which baffle the Western ear. Mr. Tagore sets them to the measures of our harmony. They are simply, exalted, fragrant - episodes and incidents of every day transposed to fairy. Here is a village lyric:

The yellow bird sings in their tree and makes my heart dance with gladness,

We both live in the same village, and that is our one piece of joy

Her pair of pet lambs come to graze in the shade of our garden trees

If they stray into our barley field, I take them up in my arms

The name of our village is Khanjana, and Anjana they call our river

My name is known to all the village, and her name is Ranjana

Only one field lies between us

Bees that have hived in our grove go to seek honey in theirs

Flowers launched from their landing stairs come floating by the stream where we bathe

The stars that smile on their cottage send us the same twinkling look

The name of our village is Khanjana, and Anjana they call our river

My name is known to all the village, and her name is Ranjana

These poems are written at an earlier age than the "Gitanjali," though they are published in English later. There is less of mysticism and religion in "The Gardener," but one perfect song of earth:

Infinite wealth is not yours, my patient and dusky mother dust!

You toil to fill the mouths of your children, but food is scarce.

The gift of gladness that you have for us is never perfect.

The toys that you make for your children are fragile.

You cannot satisfy all our hungry hopes but should I desert you for that?

\**The Gardener* by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan and Co.) 4s. 6d.

Your smile which is shadowed with pain, is sweet  
to my eyes.

Your love, which knows not fulfilment, is dear to  
my heart

From your breast you have fed us with life but  
not immortality, that is why your eyes are ever wake-  
ful.

For ages you are working with colour and song, yet  
your heaven is not built, but only its sad suggestion.

Over your creations of beauty there is the mist  
of tears.

I will pour my songs into your mute heart and  
my love into your love.

I will worship you with labour

I have seen your tender face and I love your  
mournful dust Mother Earth.

The songs of passion are many. They capture the ecstasy of first love and sound the maturer depths. As our country lovers have seen a lovely face in the contours of the moon, so a shy girl in "The Gardener" "gazed at the sky and wove in the blue the letters of a name I had known, while the village slept in the noonday heat." It is all simply and easily expressed, without the slightest pose or shadow of affection. Emotion wells out into words with the artlessness of all great poetry. The verses are not scholarly or intricate but plainly human and unadorned. In our more artificial world what an elaborate drawing-room ballad would be manufactured round this theme:

Hands cling to hands and eyes linger in eyes;  
thus begins the record of our hearts.

It is the moonlit night of March; the sweet smell  
of henna is in the air; my flute lies on earth neglected, and your garland of flowers is unfinished.

This love between you and me is simple as  
asong.

They know the joy of living, too, the people of Tagore's songs. They chant upon a fine morning praises of the cloud shadows sweeping over the crops, of the bees "drunken with light," and of "the ducks in the islands of the river" which "clamour in joy for mere nothing." They sing the refrain:

Let none go back home, brothers, this morning;  
let none go to work.

Brothers, let us squander our morning in futile songs.

Most men have heard these questions from a woman, but were they ever more beautifully expressed?

Is it true that my lips are sweet, like the opening  
bud of the first conscious love?

Do the memories of vanished months of May  
linger in my limbs?

Is it true, is it true, that your love travelled alone  
through ages and worlds in search of me?

That when you found me at last your age-long  
desire found utter peace in my gentle speech and my  
eyes and lips and flowing hair?

Is it then true that the mystery of the infinite is  
written on this little forehead of mine?

Tell me my lover, if all this is true.

In the Bengali philosophy of life, as Mr. Tagore reveals it in his songs, there is no hatred, envy, or malice. His world is serene and beautiful as one of our calm autumn days, when the mist lies opalescent under the golden sun in the valleys, and on the hill-sides the great trees stand expressive and immovable like eternal monuments. Truly he says: "My songs share their seats in the heart of the world with the music of the clouds and forests."

*1 November, 1913*

### THE IRISH CITIZEN

p190 (W)

#### Section: THE CITIZEN'S BOOKSHELF

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore left his Bengal home a couple of years ago in order to have a rest in London. Instead of which he was discovered: the rest was not silence, and two volumes of his poetry lie open before us: "*Gitanjali*," (Song Offerings) and "*The Gardener*," both from the publishing firm of Macmillan.

The contents of the two books are technically translations in English prose from Bengali; but the translations have been done by the poet himself from his native verse-form into English of such pure lyrical quality, and with such joy and spontaneity, that they are a new creation.

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## LOVE'S GIFT.

I thought I should ask of thee—but I dared not—the rose wreath thou hadst on thy neck. Thus I waited for the morning, when thou didst depart, to find a few fragments on the bed. And like a beggar I searched in the dawn only for a stray petal or two.

Ah, me, what is it I find? What token left of my love? It is no flower, no spices, no vase of perfumed water. It is thy mighty sword flashing as a flame, heavy as a bolt of thunder. The young light of morning comes through the window and spreads itself upon thy bed. The morning bird twitters and asks, "Woman, what hast thou got?" No, it is no flower, nor spices, nor vase of perfumed water—it is thy dreadful sword.

I sit and muse in wonder, what gift is this of thine. I can find no place where to hide it. I am ashamed to wear it, frail as I am, and it hurts me when I press it to my bosom. Yet shall I bear in my heart this honour of the burden of pain, this gift of thine.

From now there shall be no fear left for me in this world, and thou shalt be victorious in all my strife. Thou hast left death for my companion and I shall crown him with my life. Thy sword is with me to cut asunder my bonds, and there shall be no fear left for me in the world.

From now I leave off all pretty decorations. Lord of my heart, no more shall there be for me waiting and weeping in corners, no more coyness and sweetness of demeanour. Thou hast given me thy sword for adornment. No more doll's decorations for me!

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.  
(From "Gitanjali.")

## Poetry.

### AT THE CROSSING.

THERE is room enough for you. You are alone with your few sheaves of rice.  
My boat is crowded, it is heavily laden, but how can I turn you away?  
There is room enough for you.  
Your young body is slim and awaying; there is a glimmer of a smile in the corner of your eyes, and the color of your robe is that of the rain-cloud, softly blue.  
Come to my boat, there is room for you.  
The travellers will land at different landings, unknown to each other.  
You will sit only for a short while on the prow of my boat, and when the journey is over none will keep you back.  
Come, there is room enough for you.  
Where do you go, and to what home, to garner your sheaves?  
If you must be silent, I will not question you.  
But when I fold my sails and moor my boat at the bank I shall sit and wonder in the evening where you go, and to what home, to garner your sheaves

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Fig. 9 Tagore's poems published

[Left] in *The Nation*, 1 November, 1913, p216 [Right] in *The Irish Citizen*, 1 November, 1913, p190

They take their place, without question, not far from the summit of "English literature." They are, perhaps, the forerunners (in conjunction with the poems of W. B. Yeats and AE) of the greatest movement in European literature yet experienced - its coming emergence from the low levels of "realism" and intellectualism merely, to the plane of its true voice as the exponent of a divine-humanity.

There is not one of Rabindranath's poems that does not lift the mind into some higher and purer region of itself. They perform this grateful service, not by the use of a literary ritual, but by the simple, yet amazingly abundant, expression of personal human experience. Their appeal to a deeper sense than the aesthetic and the mental, though these too are richly present, is made all the more acute by the employment of colour and imagery that is strange to Western ears, and out of its strangeness imparts an aroma of exquisite beauty unsullied by familiarity or vulgarization.

"**The Gardener**" in particular should be in every suffragist library, not because of any direct contribution that it makes to suffragist argument, but because it discloses the heart of India as regards womanhood, and manifests a purity and veneration that are as morning sunlight to the guttering artificial glare of Western convention.

J.H.C.

2 November, 1913

**THE OBSERVER**

p12c7:S

**Section : NEWS IN FEW LINES**

### **VISIT OF A JAPANESE POET**

Mr. Yone Noguchi, the Japanese poet, is, says the "Nation", to be the successor of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore in this country as the interpreter of Eastern poetry and philosophy. Mr. Noguchi is now on his way to England and he proposes to give a series of public readings of his own works as well as a course of lectures. He will begin at Oxford, where he is to be the guest of Sir Walter Raleigh.

14 November, 1913

**THE DAILY CHRONICLE**

p7c7(D)

### **INDIAN POET HONOURED**

#### **NOBEL PRIZE FOR BENGALI "PROPHET" RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S WORK AND TEACHING**

**STOCKHOLM, Nov. 13**

**The Nobel prize for literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore Reuter.**

The prize, which is one of those founded by the late Dr. Nobel in 1901, amounts to nearly £8,000. By the terms of Dr. Nobel's will it is to be awarded by the Swedish Academy to the person who, during the year immediately preceding, shall have produced in the field of literature the most distinguished work of an idealistic tendency.

The award of a Nobel prize to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the famous poet, writer and teacher, is a remarkable event in the history of the World's literature. He has brought great literature, the mind of the East, to us in our own tongue.

Others have been dazzled by the mystery, the brightness, the immensity of India; we have drunk deep of its colour. But Mr. Tagore brings us its mind; he has given us in rhythmic prose the songs the people of Bengal sing; he shows us their point of view, how they appreciate beauty, their joy in life, their patriotism. He has built a bridge between East and West.

Rabindranath Tagore has been called the prophet of Indian nationalism, and he enjoys a wide fame in his native land. He is the son of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore-Marharshi means "Great Sage" a wise man belonging to one of the most ancient Bengali families. The poet's grandfather was prince Dwarkanath Tagore, who visited England during Queen Victoria's reign, and met with a most cordial reception at Court. The members of the "Great Sage's" family - four sons and three daughters - are all distinguished. The second was the first Indian to enter the Indian Civil Service, and the eldest has a wide fame in Bengal as the phi-

losopher. One of this daughters conducts the "Bharati" magazine.

### EDUCATED HIMSELF

The poet was born about 52 years ago. As a boy he did not like school, and early fell into the habit of educating himself. He did not go to college, and while very young he wrote his first poems, but received little encouragement. In his early manhood he came to England to study law, but, finding that that took him out of his element, he returned to India to write those lyrics and verses which have made his name known and loved throughout the length and breadth of his native land. Not only is he a poet, but he is also a philosopher, having written many volumes containing his teachings. Plays, too, he has produced, but he does not confine his energies to the study. At Bolpur, near Calcutta, he has a large school. The pupils, about 200 in number, are instructed in the open air. Tagore has trained his own staff of teachers, and while he is inspired by nationalism, he has not hesitated to turn to his purpose what he regards as the best in English methods of instruction, and to profit by the experience of the West.

He is a great admirer of England, and believes that this country and his own are bound together

by unbreakable ties and have a high destiny to fulfil together.

Tagore is a man of striking appearance. He has a high forehead of a thinker, a flowing beard, flashing eyes, and a distinguished appearance. During his recent visit to this country he might often be seen in London's streets dressed in a picturesque Oriental costume.

### A BENGALI RENAISSANCE

The poet has not only done splendid work in revealing the mind of the East to the West, but his

work may truly be said to have brought about a Renaissance in Bengali literature. The hour brought the man, for the literature of Bengal had for a couple of centuries up to about 60 years ago been in a lamentably decadent state.

Tagore has translated some of his verse and lyrics into English, and two volumes have appeared—the "Gitanjali," or Offerings of Song, and recently, "The Gardener."

Here are two quotations to illustrate the charm of his poetic work

We do not stray out of all words into the ever silent, we do not raise our hands to the void for things beyond hope

It is enough that we give and we get. We have not crushed the joy to the utmost to wring from it the wine of pain

### Rabindranath Tagore.



The famous Indian poet who has been awarded the Nobel prize for literature.

Fig. 10 *The Daily Chronicle*  
14 November, 1913, p7

This love between you and me is simple as a  
song

Then the tender passion of this:

When she passed by me with quick steps, the end  
of her skirt touched me

From the unknown island of a heart came a sudden  
breath of spring

A flutter of a flitting touch brushed me and vanished  
in a moment, like a torn flower petal blown in  
the breeze

It fell upon my heart like a sign of her body and  
whisper of her hearts

No envy or hatred has a place in his poetry of  
philosophy, but beauty and love and patriotism, and  
the honour bestowed upon him should have the  
effect of introducing his work to the wider public it  
deserves.

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14 November, 1913

### THE DAILY EXPRESS

p5c4{D}

### NOBEL PRIZE FOR INDIAN POET.

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE WINS HIGH HONOUR WISDOM OF THE EAST

STOCKHOLM, Thursday, Nov 13.

The Nobel Prize for literature for 1913 has been  
awarded to the Indian poet, Mr. Rabindranath  
Tagore - Reuter.

Mr Rabindranath Tagore is a Bengali poet and  
mystic who has won world-wide recognition.

When he was nineteen years old he wrote his  
first novel, and subsequently plays and poems with  
other fiction, all marked by extraordinary beauty  
of thought and simplicity of language. His renown  
in India is unrivalled.

Now, at the age of fifty-two, Mr. Rabindranath  
Tagore has won the blue riband of literature. The  
honour follows a recent visit by the poet to this  
country and the United States, which lasted a year.

He left England for India early last September.

Recently Mr. Tagore translated some of his poems  
into English prose, and the revelation of their  
beauty even in an alien tongue, caused a great  
outburst of admiration.

His "Song Offerings", the English translation  
of his Bengali poems, are remarkably beautiful and  
felicitous. A play written by him, "The Post Office",  
was performed at the Court Theatre with  
great success last July.

The following lines from his collection of love  
poems, published by Messrs. Macmillan under the  
title of "the Gardener", show his wonderful delicacy  
of expression:

"Why did the flower fade?

I pressed it to my heart with anxious love, that  
is why the flower faded

Why did the harp string break?

I tried to force a note that was beyond its power,  
that is why the harp string is broken"

Deep philosophy is also expressed in many of his  
poems. Here is a sample from his "Song Offerings".

"The child who is decked with prince's robes  
and who has jewelled chains round his neck loses all  
pleasure in his play; his dress hampers him at every  
step. "In fear that it may be frayed, or stained with  
dust, he deeps himself from the world and is afraid  
even to move

"Mother, it is no gain, thy bondage of finery, if  
it keeps one shut off from the healthful dust of the  
earth, if it robs one of the right of entrance to the  
great fair of common human life"

Here is another of his love songs:

"Hands cling to hands, eyes linger in eyes; thus  
begins the record of our hearts

"It is the moonlit night of March, the sweet smell  
of henna is in the air; my flute lies on the earth  
neglected, and your garland of flowers is unfinished

"The love between you and me is simple as a  
song"

The value of the Nobel Prize this year is £7,948.

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14 November, 1913  
**THE DAILY MAIL**  
 p7c3(D)

## **NOBEL PRIZE FOR AN INDIAN POET**

### **MR. TAGORE'S TRIUMPH**

#### **FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT**

**STOCKHOLM, Thursday**

**The Nobel Prize for literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore.**

Mr. Tagore is fifty-two years old. His simple but inspired songs, echoing the voice of India, have long been sung in the homes of the people and along the roads and rivers wherever his native Bengali is spoken. He translated them into rhythmical English prose, and now the seal is set on the homage of the West to his genius.

His is purely the poetry of inspiration, for his scholarship days were few. "I did not have much college training," he says, "because I had a distaste for school." He began writing prose and poetry at an early age and, after learning Sanskrit and English, translated many works into Bengali. He wrote his first novel when nineteen and was then already famous in his own country. In his youth he came to England to study law, but the call of the Muse was too strong and he went back to India to his verse, novels and plays. Mr. Tagore visited England last year and was entertained at dinner by a company of distinguished authors, Mr. W. B. Yeats, who presided, saying: "I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal Mr. Tagore's lyrics."

#### **FAME IN EAST AND WEST**

Writing in the Daily Mail last month a reviewer described Mr. Tagore as "a great man from Bengal," and said, "I remember no one whose work has given me more delight, refreshment, and surprise. One met him first in little lyrics in English periodicals. Then came that beautiful volume

called the "Gitanjali" or Song-Offerings, an exquisite combination of poetry, philosophy, and adoration. Now we are given "The Gardener" with flowers as fresh as surprise. And the poet, at the age of fifty-two, will find his fame shining in the West as it has long shone in the East. It is something new in our Imperial history to get great literature in our own tongue from the East. Most men have heard these questions from a woman, but were they ever more beautifully expressed?

Tell me if this be all true, my lover, tell me if this be true;

Is it true that my lips are sweet, like the opening bud of the first conscious love?

Do the memories of vanished months of May linger in my limbs?

Is it true that your love travelled alone through ages and worlds in search of me?

That when you found me at last your age-long desire found utter peace in my gentle speech and my eyes and lips and flowing hair?

Is it then true, that the mystery of the Infinite is written on this little forehead of mine?

Tell me, my lover, if all this be true

Mr. Kipling is the only other British subject to whom the Nobel literature prize worth £7,700 has been awarded. Among others who have received this prize are M. Sully-Prudhomme, France; M. Bjornson, Norway; M. Sienkiewicz, Poland; M. Maeterlinck, Belgium; and Herr Hauptmann, Germany.

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14 November, 1913  
**THE DAILY NEWS AND LEADER**  
 p1c5(D)

## **NOBEL PRIZE FOR INDIAN POET**

**STOCKHOLM, THURSDAY**

The Nobel prize for literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian Poet, Rabindranath Tagore - Reuter.

[contd p8c3]

**THE NOBEL PRIZE**

In awarding this year's Nobel Prize for literature to Mr. Tagore the Nobel Committee have established their reputation for catholicity, for the same body but a few years ago awarded the prize to Mr. Kipling. Mr. Kipling and Tagore are the only British subjects who have been thus honoured. Both, by an odd chance, are intimately connected in life and work with India. But India could not very well express herself through men more different in spirit and craftsmanship than this rough rider of Imperialism and this delicate artist of the most intimate nationalism. Perhaps there is here evidence of a change in the temper of thought, for the opinions and tendencies of writers are not disregarded by the Nobel Committee when they are weighing their literary merits. On no other hypothesis can be explained the persistence with which the claims of Anatole France, assuredly the living writer with the most universal reputation have been passed over. Or, again, their blindness to Hardy's pre-eminence; for Hardy is no longer a purely insular classic; no Continental critic worth his salt or heedful of his reputation now dares ignore Hardy. The Nobel Committee is a conservative body, and the scepticism of Anatole France and the pessimism of Hardy are too unorthodox to find favour. Within the limits of choice they allow themselves they have made a fine and bold selection. They have shown that art knows no East and West for ever sundered by a mutual unintelligibility. The great themes are same for Orient as for Occident, because they are the humanity which in many essentials is the same everywhere

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*14 November, 1913***THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p5c4(D)

**SECTION: CURRENT LITERATURE****THE GARDENER**

(Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.)

In his preference of this volume of lyrics Mr Rabindranath Tagore informs us that they were

written at a much earlier period than that of his religious work, the "Gitanjali," which has been widely hailed as notable alike in spiritual power and poetic value. We may suppose, therefore, that the present collection of poems represents a less mature phase of the author's artistic development. As translated by him from the original Bengali into a prose rhythm, not distantly resembling that of the English version of Psalms, they have a charm of surface which scarcely compensates for essential alightness. They seem to be of the material of poetry rather than poetry itself. The moments, the floating thoughts, impressions, and emotions that they envisage are not, for the most part of any separate and inevitable significance. Of that flowery and extravagantly felicitous imagery known as Eastern, there is indeed, abundance, but mere wealth for metaphor without the central jewel of an inspired thought is no more that decorate prettiness. It is in the part rather than the whole, in the verse rather than in the song, that are to be found shapes of poetic art. An example will serve to illustrate this criticism. The poems are designated only by numbers. Here is 84:

Over the green and yellow rice field sweep the  
shadows of the autumn clouds, followed by the swift  
chasing sun.

The bees forget to sip their honey, drunken with  
light they foolishly hover and hum

The ducks in the islands of the river clamour in  
joy for mere nothing

Let none go back home, brothers, this morning,  
let none go to work

Let us take the blue sky by storm, and plunder  
space as we run

Laughter floats in the air like foam on the flood  
Brothers, let us squander our morning in futile songs

The love lyrics are delicate and fanciful rather than passionate. Mr. Tagore's facility in the employment of apt English is seen in this invocation:

You are the evening cloud floating in the sky of  
my dreams

I paint you and fashion you ever with my love  
longings.

You are my own, my own, dweller in my endless  
dreams!

Your feet are rosy-red with the glow of my heart's desire, gleaner of my sunset songs!

Your lips are bitter-sweet with the taste of my wine of pain.

You are my own, my own, dweller in my lone-some dream of dreams!

With the shadow of my passion have I darkened your eyes, haunter of the depth of my gaze!

I have caught you and wrapt you, my love, in the net of my music.

You are my own, my own, dweller in my deathless dreams!

The poems, which take their title from the first of the series, are dedicated to Mr. W. B. Yeats.

[contd. p15c1]

## HONOUR TO INDIAN POET

### NOBEL PRIZE FOR MR. TAGORE

#### STOCKHOLM, THURSDAY

The Nobel prize for literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore – Reuter.

Since the publication in London last year of his book of religious poems, entitled “Gitanjali,” or “Song Offerings,” Mr. Tagore has leaped into literary fame in this country. He has long been a recognised poet and essayist in Bengal, of which he is a native. He belongs to a prominent Calcutta family, and his father was known as a Maharshi, or saint, and the founder of a religious society which eventually incorporated in the Brahmo Samaj. Some years ago Mr. Rabindranath Tagore started, near Calcutta, a school in which the training conducted on a purely spiritual basis, is said to have the most remarkable effect on the characters both of masters and pupil. Mr. Tagore has stated that his system contributes in making the boys, of whom there are now 200 in the school, as happy as possible. The Government of India regards this institution with sympathy.

As a young man, Mr. Tagore came to England and made acquaintance with the work of great English poets. Tennyson and Shelley gave him the

same pleasure that he had found in Sanskrit poetry, but, since he knew very little English, it was at first the rhythm rather than the thought that delighted him. Then by further study of poets and of the classic novelists he acquired a command of English in its purest mould. Besides writing verse in Bengali, Mr. Tagore made many translations from English and Sanskrit into his native tongue. At the age of 19 he wrote a novel which obtained celebrity in India.

## APPRECIATION IN ENGLAND

The “Gitanjali” is a collection of religious poems translated by the author from Bengali into English. They have been greatly praised by poets and critics. Mr. W. B. Yeats, the Irish poet, who wrote an introduction to the work, has said: “I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics. Even as I read them in this literal prose translation they are as exquisite in style as in thought.”

Mr. Tagore sets his poems to music, and they are sung by the people in the West of India, and wherever Bengali is spoken. No comparison can be made between his verse and that of Western poets, and it is doubtful if, even in his wonderfully apt translation, Mr. Tagore's poems would have found a ready appreciation in England were it not for the fact that in style they resemble, although they can not be said to equal, the familiar models of Oriental literature contained in the Bible.

14 November, 1913

THE EVENING NEWS

p4c5(DE)

## WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE

### INDIAN POET'S ENGLISH LYRICS

The award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, a well-known poet and prose writer in Bengal, who has become popular in this country through his translations of his

own poems, is a notable event in the domain of letters. Among previous writers who have been awarded this distinction have been M. Sully-Prudhomme, Mommsen, Bjornson, Mistral, Carducci, Kipling, Materlinck and Hauptmann. Mr Tagore is 52.

It is a good many years ago since John Bright told the students of Glasgow University that there were more people, natives of India who could and did read Shakespeare and Milton than there were in this country. The distinction of the Nobel Prize for literature for 1913, which has just been awarded to the Indian poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore, is a wonderful reminder of the progress of our English tongue, and perhaps in its way also something of a refutation of Mr. Kipling's familiar dictum that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," for the gift of English poetry has made Mr. Tagore free of the commonwealth in which Newman's motto "cor ad cor loquitur" is the sole password

### A Poet's Praise.

Rabindra Nath Tagore, who has been described as the prophet of the Indian nation, is the son of Maharsi ("The Great Sage") Debendra Nath Tagore, of Calcutta, who was a great friend of Queen Victoria. As befits an oriental poet of such eminence Mr. Tagore dresses where amongst us in his native garb, and with his distinctive Aryan features stands apart from the throng. Like a good many of his countrymen he has studied for the Bar, though his real bent was towards poetry, and so he abandoned the law that he might "strictly mediate the thankless Muse." As a poet, who has enshrined in musical lines the soul of patriotism, Mr. Tagore has naturally appealed strongly to that pioneer of the Celtic revival, Mr. W. B. Yeats, who a little over a year ago presided at a dinner in Mr. Tagore's honour at the Trocadero Restaurant. "I have been carrying about with me," said Mr. Yeats, "a book of translations into English prose of 100 of Mr. Tagore's lyrics, written within the last ten years. I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics."

One thinks of Tennyson's tribute to Edward

Fitzgerald, who had turned an Eastern poet's Hedonistic philosophy into haunting English quatrains:

Your golden Eastern lay  
Than which I know no version done  
In English more divinely well'

### Songs of the People

But the mellow metre of Omar is not the music of Mr. Tagore's poems. Written first in his native tongue of Bengal, they have been turned by their author into a measure that rather recalls Walt Whitman at his best, though his passionate lyrics are a far cry from Whitman. It is, of course, an old style to Europe - to make nobler comparison it has in it a touch of the melody which belonged to the cowed minstrel who left us the Psalms. Musician as well as poet - the comparison with the Psalmist again - Mr. Tagore set his heart-moving words to the airs that caught the imagination of his people, who sang them as our Northern forefathers sang the old ballads centuries ago.

### Love and Sorrow

Mr. Yeats in his "Introduction" to "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings), which along with another small volume, "The Gardener" and "The Crescent Moon Child Poems," Messrs Macmillan have published for Mr. Tagore, tells us how, speaking to a distinguished Bengali doctor of medicine, he remarked on the parallel case of an Englishman living in London in the reign of Richard II who, being shown translations from Petrarch or Dante, would have had to question a Florentine banker or Lombard merchant if he wished an answer to his questions, and he added, "For all I know, so abundant and so simple is this poetry, the new Renaissance has been born in your country and I shall never know of it except by hearsay." And the Bengali doctor answered, "We have other poets, but none that are his equal; we call this the epoch of Rabindra Nath."

"No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the West of India into Burmah wherever Bengali is spoken. He was already famous at fifteen when he wrote his first

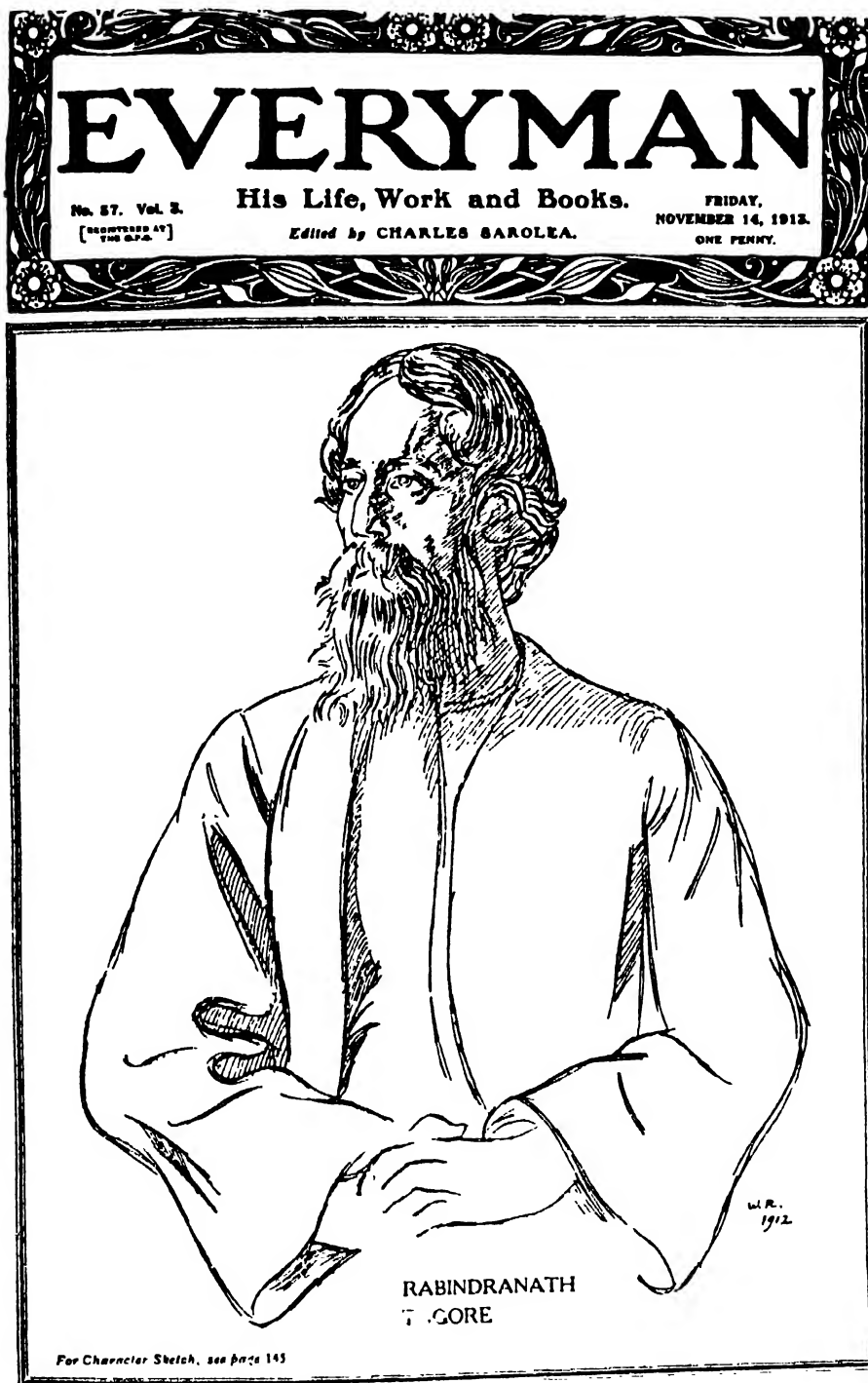


Fig. 11 Sketch by William Rothenstein, published on the cover of *Everyman*  
14 November, 1913

novel; and plays, written when he was a little older, are still in Calcutta... From his twenty-fifth year or so to his thirty-fifth perhaps, when he had a great sorrow, he wrote the most beautiful love poetry in our language... After that his art grew deeper, it became religious and philosophical; all the aspirations of mankind are in his hymns. He is the first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of life itself, and that is why we give him our love."

### Wistful Philosophy

In Mr. Tagore's own words, it has been his desire that his Bengali poems, done by himself into an English that has something of the magic and limpid clearness of the Authorised version, should be hummed by "travellers on the highway and men owing upon rivers." Far, indeed, from the rollicking idea of India one gets from, say, "Mandalay," is the wistful philosophy that finds expression in such lines as these in "The Gardener".

Infinite wealth is not yours, my patient and dusky mother dust!

The gift of gladness that you have for us is never perfect

From your breast you have fed us with life, but not with immortality, that is why your eyes are ever wakeful

Because I love this life I know I will love death as well The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away to find its consolation in the left one the very next moment

14 November, 1913

**EVENING STANDARD AND ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE**

p8c3(DE)

### Section : NOTES

### ENTER THE ORIENT

THE AWARD OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE FOR 1913 TO RABINDRANATH

TAGORE, THE GREAT WRITER OF BENGAL, IS ONE MORE REMINDER OF HOW COSMOPOLITAN WE ARE ALL BECOMING.

Not for a moment do we grudge the award. Although in their English dress, at any rate, the love songs and devotional hymns of the Bengali genius bear as much resemblance to what we are accustomed to call poetry as the super-Alexandrian lines of Walt Whitman, yet this defect is more than counterbalanced by the warm delight in and love for his fellowmen expressed in lyrical forms of great beauty. There is much in common between him and George Elliot.

It will be so much to the good if this award opens our eyes wider to the treasures of Oriental poetry. Some of the old Chinese odes strike chords quite unknown to English ears, and as charming as they are novel.

14 November, 1913

**EVERYMAN**

p145(W)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By Ernest Rhys

### I

The test of a poet is that he can create a region of his own, fill it with congenial forms, and give it a rich language in keeping with its spirit. The book "Gitanjali,"\* reproducing an Indian melody with some change of key, achieved at a stroke this ancient miracle of the song-maker. The songs it contained were of a kind to leave the English listener astonished at the wealth of lyric life they showed, and their command of a second and harder medium. Rabindranath Tagore, however, lived over here for a time as a student in the years that count most to a writer, and he learnt then what he most needed to learn of our Western tongue and its idiom. And if anyone should ask how his English settings compare with the Bengali originals, an Indian would reply that if they lose in melody by the change of rhythm and by turning the airy motion of the Indian song-measures into something slower and graver,

\*Messrs. Macmillan and Co.

their real spirit is extraordinarily well maintained. The one is air, the other water, we may say in the specific gravity of song; but there is no doubt that Mr. Tagore chose out of English the best medium available when he took the free unrhymed rhythms that he has used with such force and grace and affecting cadence. Try the twenty sixth song in "Gitanjali":

"He came and sat by my side, but I woke not.  
What accursed sleep it was, O miserable me!

"He came when the night was still; he had his  
harp in his hands, and my dreams became resonant  
with its melodies.

"Alas, why are my nights all thus lost? Ah, why  
do I ever miss his sight whose breath touches my  
sleep?"

Those who had the good fortune to hear the poet sing any of his songs in the original form and to the original music will easily convey into the English settings the effect of that wilder music. But that is not needed. The song in its present shape holds its own; and so it is with its companion pieces. They are not translated, but transmuted.

## II

"Gitanjali" - otherwise "Song Offerings" - is in essence the song-book of an Eastern mystic and a God-intoxicated poet. Almost every page is touched by the suspense of the visionary who waits on the hour of illumination. In the sixty-seventh, sixty-eight, sixty-ninth and seventieth songs we find the symbols of day and night, earth and sky, charged with the double emotion of foretasted joys and things yet more wonderful to come. Listen to No. 69, which is the seer's song of triumphant love:

"The same stream of life that runs through my  
veins night and day runs through the world and dances  
in rhythmic measures.

"It is the same life that shoots in joy through the  
dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and  
breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

"It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-  
cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.

"I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch  
of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-  
throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment."

## III

Last summer, when in England, Sir. Rabindranath Tagore gave a series of discourses, soon to be published now, with the title of "Sadhana" In these we were able to gauge the depth of his ideas, and to understand the governing harmony of life with experience of thought with action that directs all his later writing. Mr. Yeats, in his introduction to "Gitanjali" alluded to the organic inherent quality in them when he said that a whole people, a whole civilisation, seems to have been taken up into their imagination. A nature so richly endowed by the associations and propitious rhythms of a race, a country and an ideal language, has not before been sent over from the West - not in our time. And it is significant the envoy should have come when he did; when the long misunderstanding of the East by the West should seem to be giving way. If ever an intermediary, gifted with a tongue of delicate eloquence, and with a dual insight into the natures and temperamental ways of two peoples, was designed by fate for the office, it was surely Rabindranath Tagore. To be able to talk with him during his late visit was to gain a new intelligence of the spirit of India. It is right to add that our overpowering practical energy, our belief in a gross material civilisation and its worldwide path, rather appalled him on a nearer contact. They were, he thought, against our full treaty with the genius of Hindu - contemplative, imaginative, looking for Nirvana. Our life indeed struck him as too full of sensation, and of the fierce struggle for the immediate things - money and position - to allow us in full the grace of art, the peace needed for the spiritual life. This feeling of his will be found reflected in certain pages of "Sadhana," which breathe an immemorial calm, and a faith unable to rest satisfied in a town-made life, that leaves out of count the nurture of heart and soul. He echoes there the cry of the Rishi who says "Listen to me, ye sons of the immortal spirit, ye who live in the heavenly abode; I have known the supreme one whose light shines out from beyond the darkness." But we must wait until "Sadhana" is published to explain what the full realisation of life means in his ideal philosophy.

## IV

If there is a difference in us, East and West, then those of us who are most aggressively Western by habit would do well, in order to appreciate this Indian poet, to turn first perhaps to what is for us his newest book. "The Gardener"\* is in fact the expression of his youth, with the happiness of the lover, the gaiety of morning, and the passion of night in it. Its music and its charm may be gathered in this lay of the young lover:

"If you would have it so, I will end my singing

"If it sets you a-flutter, I will take away my eyes from your face.

"If it suddenly startles you in your walk, I will step aside and take another path.

"If it confuses you in your flower-weaving, I will shun, your lovely garden

"If it makes the water wanton and wild, I will not row my boat by your bank "

"The Gardener" is not a book of mystical poems, but a lover's garland from an Indian garden. Read it for what it is, without second thoughts, or reference to "Gitanjali," or its weight of human experience. It is the preluding of the poet we have learnt to know, who has become the master-voice of a race that is in communion with the supernatural to be reached through nature, in the vision of thought awakening from the sleep of self to the perfect consciousness and the highest reality.

14 November, 1913

GLASGOW NEWS

p2c5(D)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE  
NOBEL PRIZE POET  
OWES LITTLE TO SCHOLARSHIP**

The Nobel Prize for Literature, 1913, has been awarded to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, who is fifty-two years of age. The prize is worth about £7,880, and was awarded to Rudyard Kipling some years ago.

Since the publication in London last year of his religious poems, entitled "Gitanjali", or "Song Of-

ferings", Mr. Tagore has leapt into literary fame in this country. He has long been a recognised poet and essayist in Bengal, of which he is a native. He belongs to a prominent Calcutta family, and his father was known as a Maharshi or saint, and the founder of a religious society which eventually became incorporated in the Brahmo Samaj. Some years ago Mr. Rabindranath Tagore started near Calcutta a school, in which the training, conducted on a purely spiritual basis, is said to have the most remarkable effect on the characters both of masters and pupils.

**Poetry of Inspiration**

His is purely the poetry of inspiration, for his scholarship days were few. A critic says, as he had distaste for school, he began writing prose and poetry at an early age, and after learning Sanskrit and English translated many works into Bengali. He wrote his first novel when nineteen, and was then already famous in his own country. In his youth he came to England to study law, but the call of the muses was too strong, and he went back to India to his verse, novels and plays.

Mr. Tagore visited England last year, and was entertained at dinner by a company of distinguished authors. Mr. W. B. Yeats, who presided, saying, "I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal Mr. Tagore's lyrics".

**A Lover's Questions**

Most men have heard these questions from a woman, but were they ever more beautifully expressed?

Tell me if this be all true, my lover, tell me if this be true.

Is it true that my lips are sweet, like the opening bud of the first conscious love?

Do the memories of vanished months of May linger in my limbs?

Is it true, is it true, that your love travelled along through ages and worlds in search of me?

That when you found me at last your age-long desire found ~~water~~ peace in my gentle speech and my eyes and lips and flowing hair?

Is it then true that the mystery of the infinite is written on this little forehead of mine?

Tell me, my lover, if all this is true

14 November, 1913

THE GLOBE

p7c1(DE)

## HONOUR FOR INDIAN POET

### MR. TAGORE AWARDED THE NOBEL PRIZE

#### SONGS OF THE EAST

The Nobel Prize for Literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Mr. Tagore's English prose translations of his Bengali poems were introduced to the English public by Mr. W. B. Yeats, who presided at a dinner given to the Indian poet at the Trocadero Restaurant in July, 1912. The Irish poet then declared:-

"I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal Mr. Tagore's lyrics."

Among the characteristic poems in his two volumes of English translations - "Gitanjali," or "Song Offerings," and "The Gardener" - are the following beautiful lines:

Tell me if this be all true, my lover, tell me if this be true:

Is it true that my lips are sweet, like the opening bud of the first conscious love?

Do the memories of vanished months of May linger in my limbs?

Is it true, is it true, that your love travelled alone through ages and worlds in search of me?

That when you found me at last your age-long desire found utter peace in my gentle speech and my eyes and lips and flowing hair?

Is it then true that the mystery of the infinite is written on this little forehead of mine?

Tell me my lover, if all this be true

....

Hands cling to hands, and eyes linger in eyes; thus begins the record of our hearts.

It is the moonlit night of March; the sweet smell of henna is in the air; my flute lies on the earth neglected, and your garland of flowers is unfinished.

This love between you and me is simple as a song.

....

When she passed by me with quick steps, the end of her skirt touched me.

From the unknown island of a heart came a sudden breath of spring.

A flutter of a flitting touch brushed me and vanished in a moment, like a torn flower petal blown in the breeze.

It fell upon my heart like a sigh of her body and whisper of her heart.

....

Why did the flower fade?

I pressed it to my heart with anxious love, that is why the flower faded

Why did the harp string break?

I tried to force a note that was beyond its power, that is why the harp string is broken

...

We do not stray out of all words into the ever silent; we do not raise our hands to the void for things beyond hope

It is enough that we give and we get

We have not crushed the joy to the utmost to wring from it the wine of pain

This love between you and me is simple as a song

....

The child who is decked with prince's robes and who has jewelled chains round his neck loses all pleasure in his play; his dress hampers him at every step

In fear that it may be frayed, or stained with dust, he keeps himself from the world and is afraid even to move

Mother, it is not gain, thy bondage of finery if it keeps one shut off from the healthful dust of the earth, if it robs one of the right of entrance to the great fair of common human life

....

In the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers.

Today the morning has closed its eyes, heedless of the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and over the ever wakeful blue sky a thick veil has been drawn.

The woodlands have hushed their songs and doors

are all shut at every house Thou art the solitary  
wayfarer in this deserted street Oh my only friend,  
my best beloved, the gates are open in my house -  
do not pass by like a dream

---

14 November, 1913

**THE IRISH TIMES**

p7c1(D)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE AWARDED  
NOBEL PRIZE**

Reuter's Stockholm Correspondent reports that the  
Nobel Prize for literature for 1913 has been awarded  
to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore.

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14 November, 1913

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p8c6(D)

**NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE**

(REUTER'S TELEGRAM)  
STOCKHOLM, THURSDAY

The Nobel Prize for literature for 1913 has been  
awarded to the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore

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14 November, 1913

**THE MORNING POST**

p7c3(D)

**THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE**

STOCKHOLM, Nov 13

The Nobel Prize for literature for 1913 has been  
awarded to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore.  
- Reuter.

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore was a well-known poet  
and essayist in Bengal long before he became known  
to the English literary world. His lyric poems were  
set to music by himself and circulated orally, so  
that, in Mr. Tagore's own words, "travellers will

hum them on the highway and men rowing upon  
rivers". Mr. Tagore's English prose translations of  
his Bengali poems were introduced to the English  
public by Mr. W. B. Yeats, who presided at a din-  
ner given to the Indian poet at the Trocadero Res-  
taurant in July, 1912. In the speech in which he  
proposed Mr. Tagore's health on that occasion the  
Irish poet declared that he knew of no man in his  
time who had done anything in the English lan-  
guage to equal his lyrics. Mr. Yeats then read sev-  
eral of Mr. Tagore's translations, one of which may  
be quoted here as characteristic of the Bengali poet:

In the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret  
steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers.

To-day the morning has closed its eyes, heedless  
of the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and over  
the ever wakeful blue sky a thick veil has been drawn.

The woodlands have hushed their songs and doors  
are all shut at every house. Thou art the solitary  
wayfarer in his deserted street. Oh my only friend,  
my best beloved, the gates are open in my house -  
do not pass by like a dream

---

14 November, 1913

**PALL MALL GAZETTE**

p8c5(DE)

**Section: NOTES OF THE DAY**

The Nobel Trustees have never fulfilled their trust  
more thoroughly than by their award of the Litera-  
ture Prize to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore. It is not that  
he has scored a success in the book-markets of the  
West with published translations of his lyrics, though  
they are, in their way, original and perfect. The thing  
is that he stands deservedly at the head of a great  
family of idealists, who have set themselves to renew  
the best traditions of India through poetry, philoso-  
phy, and the arts, and to promote the blessings of  
true civilisation by blending the spiritual elements of  
East and West. In his multiple character of poet,  
playwright, Anglophil teacher, and educational reformer,  
Mr. Tagore is one of the best influences in Asia today,  
and this accession of fresh means to carry out his  
mission is matter for deep congratulation all round.

14 November, 1913

# THE TIMES

p8c4(D)

## THE NOBEL LITERATURE PRIZE HONOUR FOR AN INDIAN POET

STOCKHOLM, Nov 13

The Nobel prize for literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore—*Reuter*.

Born in 1860 of an ancient and illustrious Bengal family whose members have often distinguished themselves in philosophy and the arts, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore in his own person exhibits an hereditary versatility. He administers his own large landed property, but has had considerable experience as a successful journalist and historian. He has composed music, enunciated philosophies, and directed a school of his own foundation. Not only does he write poetry, which has won him his reputation outside India, but like the hands of old, has been known to sing his own verses to his own music. He has written a number of dramatic works, one of which, *The Post Office*, was produced at the Court Theatre in July last, shortly after which the author was entertained at a congratulatory dinner at which Mr W. B. Yeats took the chair. Mr. Rabindranath Tagore is well known in London, having visited this country on three occasions, and *Gitanjali*, his own translation of some of his Bengali lyrics, which was published about a year ago, has introduced a new and poetical interpretation of an ancient philosophy to a wide circle of students and admirers.

14 November, 1913

# THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

p11c2(DE)

## THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

### AWARDED TO MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The Nobel Prize for Literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian Poet, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore.

It will be recollected that Mr. Tagore visited this country in the summer and several of his lectures were reported in the "Westminster." He was a well-known poet and essayist in Bengal long before he became known to the English Literary world. His lyric poems were set to music by himself and circulated orally. Mr Tagore's English prose translations of his Bengali poems were introduced to the English public by Mr. W. B. Yeats, who presided at a dinner given to the Indian Poet at the Trocadero Restaurant in July 1912

The Nobel Prize is worth about £7,700.

15 November, 1913

# THE BIRKENHEAD NEWS

p6c4(D)

## "THE GARDENER" BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Macmillan and Co.; 4s. 6d.

When, less than a year ago, Mr Rabindranath Tagore published, whilst on a visit to this country, a collection of his own English translations of his Bengali poems under the title of "Gitanjali" or "Song Offerings," the critics and, subsequently, the public recognised their rare beauty, Mr. W. B. Yeats, the Irish mystic, in writing an introduction, said "These prose translations from Rabindranath Tagore have stirred my blood as nothing has for years." and the reviewers of the great literary journals confessed that it was only by the standards of such writings as the Psalms of David and the Song of Solomon, that they could be judged. All that was said of "Gitanjali" and much more can be said of "The Gardener", but the two volumes are, in a way, utterly unlike. The first was a collection of religiously-inspired hymns; the volume under notice is a collection of love songs - and such love songs! Sir Edwin Arnold's translations of Sanskrit epics gave one some idea of the beauty of an Oriental lyric, but it has been reserved for Rabindranath Tagore, who can think poetically in both Bengali and English, to make the full revelation. These songs

are, the author tells us, the work of his youth, and therefore, earlier than "Gitanjali" One could have guessed as much. His is essentially the work of a young man:-

When the lamp went out by my bed I woke up  
with the early birds

I sat at my open window with a fresh wreath on  
my loose hair.

The young traveller came along the road in the  
rosy mist of the morning

A pearl chain was on his neck, and the sun's rays  
fell on his crown. He stopped before my door and  
asked me with an eager cry, "Where is she?"

For very shame I could not say "She is I, weary  
traveller, she is I"

It was dusk, and the lamp was not lit.

I was listlessly braiding my hair

The young traveller came on his chariot in the  
glow of the setting sun

His horses were foaming at the mouth, and there  
was dust on his garment

He alighted at my door, and asked in a tired  
voice, "Where is she?"

For very shame I could not say "She is I, very  
traveller, she is I"

It is an April night The lamp is burning in my  
room

The breeze of the South comes gently

The noisy parrot sleeps in its cage

My bodice is of the colour of the peacock's throat,  
and my mantle is green as young grass

I sit upon the floor at the window watching the  
deserted street.

Through the dark night I keep humming "She is  
I, despairing traveller, she is I."

And this, too:-

I love you, beloved Forgive me my love

Like a bird losing its way, I am caught.

When my heart was shaken it lost its veil,  
and was naked.

Cover it with pity, beloved, and forgive me my pain,  
Do not look askance at me from afar.

I will steal back to my corner and sit in the dark  
With both hands I will cover my naked shame;

Turn your face from me, beloved, and forgive  
me my pain.

If you love me, beloved, forgive me my joy of

happiness do not smile at my parlous abandonment.

When I sit on my throne and rule you with my  
tyranny of love, when like a goddess I grant you my  
favour, bear with my pride, beloved, and forgive me  
my joy.

These songs - there are eighty-five of them  
in the book - have an indefinable quality of  
charm. One might call their beauty rich and  
rare and delicate, might say they touched notes  
of wistful tenderness and of the young poets and  
yet fail utterly to convey any adequate idea of  
their real value. They must be read wholly to be  
appreciated.

### NOBEL PRIZE FOR MR. TAGORE

It was yesterday announced that the Nobel Prize  
for literature for 1913 has been awarded to Mr.  
Rabindranath Tagore.

*15 November, 1913*

**THE DAILY CHRONICLE**

p3c1(D)

### Section : BOOKS OF THE DAY

### THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

### A SPLENDID GIFT TO ENGLISH POETRY

**THE GARDENER, by Rabindranath Tagore:**

**Translated by the Author from the  
Original Bengali.**

**London. Macmillan, 1s. 6d. net.**

By Edward Thomas.

No reader of "Gitanjali" could have foreseen what  
"The Gardener" would be like, could have foreseen  
that an earthly lover would move the poet to speech  
as beautiful as a divine lover. The variety of the new  
book, new, but mostly written much earlier than  
"Gitanjali", is astonishing. It might be an anthology.  
In fact there is more variety in it than, for example,  
in Mr. Machail's "Selections from the Greek An-

thology." With the exception of about a dozen which are obscure, these poems have the representative character of great poetry. They may have sprung from particular and personal occasions, but they have a natural symbolism of universal significance.

### Youth in Age

Quite truthfully does the poet reply to one who asks whether, he being grey-haired, is musing of the hereafter, that he is "ever as young or as old as the youngest and the oldest of his village," all of whom need him "to weave their passionate songs" or to whisper the secrets of life. There is not excess of mystery, though the poems beginning "I was walking by the road, I do not know why," and "In the dusky path of a dream I went to seek the love who was mine in a former life," are among the best. Each of the many kinds rise more than once to great beauty, not only the poems of pursuit, such as "I hunt for the golden stag," and the poems of question, such as the beginning –

I hold her hands and press her to my breast  
I try to fill my arms with her loveliness, to plunder  
her sweet smile with kisses, to drink her dark  
glances with my eyes.

Ah, but where is it? Who can strain the blue  
from the sky?

But also the simple song of unquestioning, quiet  
love

Nor are the poems ever simple without being  
subtle and echoing it at the same time. Nothing  
could be simpler, nothing subtler, than this:

It fell upon my heart like a sigh of her body and  
whisper of her heart

### The Playful Mood

Some of the playful poems are among the best,  
especially the one beginning:

You left me and went on your way.

I thought I should mourn for you and set your  
solitary image in my heart wrought in a golden song

But ah, my evil fortune, time is short

This suggests an original at least equal to "What  
care I how fair she be," and "Pray thee why so

pale, fond lover." Others are playful and merry also,  
and of these the prettiest is "When the two sisters  
go to fetch water, they come to this spot and they  
smile." Yet another class is that of philosophic folly,  
in "Laughter floats in the air like foam on the flood.  
Brothers, let us squander our morning in futile  
songs," and in "I'll take holy vow to be worthless,  
to be drunken and go to the dogs."

Nor is the poet here expressing his love only of  
the maiden and what she suggests. His praise of  
the housewife will be a little hackneyed to English  
eyes, but not so the poem on the little girl, the  
baby brother and the lamb, and that one where  
the would-be ascetic hears a voice saying that the  
wife and child whom he is forsaking are God

Some of the repeated lines are rather tiresome  
in prose; so are the groups of lines that have slipped  
into jingling hexameters; and in the line, "Lang-  
guor was still upon the eyes of the dawn, and the  
dew in the air," the possibility of "hair" for "air"  
will occur and disconcert. A few poems are puz-  
zling without attracting. But the volume as a whole  
is a splendid gift to English. For they are English  
poems which have Bengali prototypes, rather than  
translations.

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15 November, 1913

### THE DAILY SKETCH

p3c4(D)

### Section: ECHOES OF THE TOWN AND ROUND ABOUT

### AWED THE SCULPTOR

THE NEW Nobel Prizeman, Rabindranath Tagore  
has a personality which exercises an extraordinary  
effect on all who see him. When he was in London  
recently "Joe" Davidson, the sculptor did his bust.  
"Joe" told me he had never had such a sitter. Sculp-  
tors sometimes lay violent hands on the heads of  
their sitters so as to get them in the best position  
for modelling. You cannot take such a liberty with  
the Bengal poet.

—

15 November, 1913

# THE DUNDEE COURIER

p8c3-D

## INDIAN POET IS HONOURED

### NOBEL PRIZE FOR BENGAL "PROPHET"

The Nobel Prize for literature for 1913 has been awarded to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore.

The Prize, which is one of those founded by the late Dr. Nobel in 1901, amounts to nearly £8,000. By the terms of Dr. Nobel's will it is to be awarded by the Swedish Academy to the person who, during the year immediately preceding, shall have produced in the field of literature the most distinguished work of an idealistic tendency.

The award of a Nobel Prize to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the famous poet, writer, and teacher, is a remarkable event in the history of the world's literature. He has brought great literature, the mind of the East, to us in our own tongue.

### WIDE FAME

Others have been dazzled by the mystery, the brightness, the immensity of India, we have drunk deep of its colour. But Mr. Tagore brings us its mind; he has given us in rhythmic prose the songs the people of Bengal sing; he shows us their point of view, how they appreciate beauty, their joy in life, their patriotism. He has built a bridge between East and West.

Rabindranath Tagore has been called the prophet of Indian nationalism, and he enjoys a wide fame in his native land. He is the son of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore - Maharshi means "Great Sage" - a wise man belonging to one of the most ancient Bengali families. The poet's grandfather was Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, who visited England during Queen Victoria's reign, and met with a most cordial reception at court.

The members of the "Great Sage's" family - four sons and three daughters - are all distinguished. The second was the first Indian to enter the Indian Civil Service, and the eldest has a wide fame in Bengal as the philosopher. One of his daughters conducted the "Bharati" magazine.

## EDUCATED HIMSELF

The poet was born about 52 years ago. As a boy he did not like school, and early fell into the habit of educating himself. He did not go to college, and while very young he wrote his first poems, but received little encouragement. In his early manhood he came to England to study law, but finding that that took him out of his element, he returned to India to write those lyrics and verses which have made his name known and loved throughout the length and breadth of his native land.

Not only is he a poet, but he is also a philosopher, having written many volumes containing his teachings. Plays too, he has produced, but he does not confine his energies to the study. At Bolepur, near Calcutta, he has a large school. The pupils, about 200 in number, are instructed in the open air. Tagore has trained his own staff of teachers, and while he is inspired by nationalism, he has not hesitated to turn to his purpose what he regards as the best in English methods of instruction, and to profit by the experience of the West.

He is a great admirer of England, and believes that this country and his own are bound together by unbreakable ties and have a high destiny to fulfil together.

Tagore is a man of striking appearance. He has the high forehead of a thinker, a flowing beard, flashing eyes, and a distinguished appearance. During his recent visit to this country he might often be seen in London's streets dressed in a picturesque Oriental costume.

15 November, 1913

# THE IRISH TIMES

p6c8-D

## AN INDIAN POET

The announcement that the Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet will, we believe, cause some surprise, but no dissatisfaction. A very short time ago his works, although long famous in India,

were quite unknown in these countries. They were first discovered for England by Mr William Rothenstein, who is to deliver the Hermione lectures in the Alexandra College next week. He brought the poet to London, and was primarily responsible for his rapid leap to fame in the West. Afterwards Mr. W. B. Yeats became the sponsor for Mr. Tagore. He spoke in public about the beauty of his Indian poems, even when they had been translated into English. He lectured about them, and even staged a play by this author in the Abbey Theatre. It did not, if we remember right, quite conform to Irish notions of drama. But we cannot deny, even if we would, the merits of Mr. Tagore's poetry, for authorities so far apart as Mr. Yeats and a Daily Mail reviewer are ready to vouch for it. We welcome the honour which has been bestowed on him, not only because it is an appreciation of good literature. It is also a sign that we are drawing a little nearer to the East, although we live in Europe. For centuries the literature and thought of India have been quite beyond the ken of all but a few scholars. We have realised vaguely that there were Hindus of high education and culture, but we have seldom even made an attempt to get to know their work. Our soldiers and officials have lived side by side with these men without discovering their literature. We must hope that the award of this prize to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore will prove to be the beginning of a new era in this respect. There must be many masterpieces of literature lying hidden from the eyes of Europe, although they may be famous in India. It is our business now to enrich ourselves by discovering them. Mr. Tagore has shown that Eastern poetry need not always lose its savour because it is translated into English. We owe our thanks to Mr. Rothenstein for opening to us a door which may lead to a region of unsuspected beauties.

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15 November, 1913

# THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p8c4(D)

The choice of the receipt of the Nobel Prize for Literature has furnished more than one surprise, but so far no selection has been quite as startling and significant as just announced Mr. RABINDRANATH TAGORE the most eminent of living Indian men of letters, has an immense reputation among his countrymen, especially in his own province of Bengal. But his fame in the West is entirely of yesterday. Until his visit to Europe last year hardly a line of his writing was known in the English-speaking world, and although at this moment a number of other volumes - poems, dramas and essays - are appearing in translation, the audience he addresses in Britain and America has been gained entirely through the little collection of mystical religious lyrics done by the poet himself into English prose and published twelve months ago under the title of "Gitanjali" (song-offerings). Now, surely this is an extraordinary thing. A poet of high renown in India but known to English readers only through one little sheaf of lyrics, and presumably not yet even a name to the educated world of Continental Europe, is awarded the single international prize for literature - and that a handsome sum of money bequeathed by a Scandinavian captain of industry. The force of contrast could no further go. That the choice is fully justified is nevertheless beyond serious dispute. He is a poet and a seer of genius. For more than thirty years (his age is 53) he has been producing, with an astonishing versatility, songs and epics, dramas and novels, criticism, philosophy, and music. There is, indeed no modern Englishman who could properly be compared with him, and if we would find a parallel we should have to go rather to the countries that have given birth to men such as BJORNSON and D'ANNUNZIO. For Mr. Tagore has touched the life of his people on almost all sides. He is the typical singer and interpreter of modern India, but he is more - a religious leader, a philosophical teacher, an educator who has founded and still directs his own school, a constructive critic of society, the most admired of all exponents of Indian nationalism on its ideal side. He belongs, moreover, to a family from which, for several centuries, has come a succession of scholars and thinkers, jurists and theologians, artists

and men of affairs. The work of RABINDRANATH TAGORE was certain in any case (after the revelation of his genius in "Gitanjali") to make its way in the West. The other day Mr. W. B. YEATS, to whom the English reader owes his introduction to Mr. Tagore, predicted that the mind of India was destined to be increasingly "the sweetener of our life and deepener of our thought." The award of the Nobel Prize to the poet of Bengal will unquestionably help to bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy

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15 November, 1913

### **SOUTHERN DAILY ECHO**

p2c3(D)

#### **Section: SPECIAL LONDON LETTER**

#### **A FAMOUS POET**

The winner of the Nobel prize for literature for 1913, Rabindranath Tagore, is by far the most famous of all living Indian poets. His songs, it has been said, "are sung from the West of India into Burmah wherever Bengali is spoken". He has numerous English admirers, too, not the least of being Mr. W. B. Yeats, who recently declared that Tagore's "Song offerings" have stirred my blood as nothing has for years." Tagore is a bearded, long-haired man of fifty-two, with a Tennysonian cast of countenance. He wrote his first novel at the age of nineteen.

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15 November, 1913

### **THE TIMES**

p13c5(D)

#### **SWEDISH TRIBUTE TO MR. TAGORE**

#### **(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT)**

STOCKHOLM, NOV 14

The newspapers this morning express some surprise at the unexpected decision of the Swedish Academy to confer the Nobel Prize for Literature

on the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. The choice, however, is hailed as a very happy one, and extracts are quoted from the English translation of the poet's work *Gitanjali*.

The Swedish poets Karfelt and Heidenstam, and the writer Hallstrom, who are all members of the Academy, have expressed their satisfaction with the award and state that the Indian poet's works, although they have only recently become known in the Western World, show an original and poetical vein of great depth and undoubted literary merit

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17 November, 1913

### **THE ABERDEEN FREE PRESS**

p4c3(D)

The Nobel Prize for Literature, which amounts to nearly £8,000, has been awarded to the Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore. This is the first occasion the prize has been given to a non-European writer, and the event is therefore one of some interest. By Dr. Nobel's will the award is made by the Swedish Academy, and the terms of the bequest are that the prize shall be given to the person who has produced, during the year immediately preceding, the most distinguished literary work of an idealistic tendency. Mr. Tagore's work certainly conforms to the description "idealistic" and of its distinction, and one may almost say uniqueness, there is no question. It is only within the last year that it has become known to Western readers, thanks to the fact that Mr. Tagore himself has translated a number of his lyrics into English and has published them in this form. Two volumes have appeared "*Gitanjali*" or *Offering of Song*, and "*The Gardener*". From one of them we may quote this poem:

When she passed by me with quick steps, the  
end of her skirt touched me

From the unknown island of a heart came a sudden  
breath of spring.

A flutter of flitting touch brushed me and vanished  
in a moment, like a torn flower petal blown in  
the breeze

It fell upon my heart like a sigh of her body and  
whisper of her heart

In other of the pieces there is a strong religious or mystical vein. The imagery is always exquisite in its delicacy and beauty, and the literary expressions soft and gentle. Students of Oriental literature will perhaps not be so greatly struck by Mr Tagore's work - we shall drop the "Mr", which sounds so incongruous - because his style and thought may be merely those that are common to all Indian writers, but to the ordinary European reader these poems come as a novelty, and the probability is that we shall soon have a Tagore vogue just as we had an Omar Khayyam one some years ago. Mr. W. B. Yeats, himself an idealist, has taken a considerable part in introducing Tagore to English readers. He presided at the dinner given to the poet on the occasion of his visit to England in 1912, and he declared that he knew no man in the present generation who had done anything in the English language to equal Tagore's lyrics. As an example Mr. Yeats read some of Tagore's translations, notable among them being this song with its wonderful closing stanza and simile of the deserted street:

In the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers

To-day the morning has closed its eyes, heedless of the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and over the ever-wakeful blue sky a thick veil has been drawn

The woodlands have hushed their songs and doors are all shut at every house. Thou art the solitary wayfarer in this deserted street. Oh my only friend, my best beloved, the gates are open in my house do not pass by like a dream

We remember Mr. Yeats delivering an address in Aberdeen upon oral tradition, in which he preached that the only lasting and true literature is the literature that is handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, like folk songs and the old Celtic legends of Finn and Cochullin. Tagore must hold the same view, for he has set his lyrics to music and has circulated them orally in Bengal, so that, in his own words, "travellers will hum them on the highways and men rowing upon the rivers." This phrase is instinct with charm and has the true poetical effect of raising in the mind's eye the picture of the generations of men each busy with simple uneventful things. Tagore belongs to a Bengali family of importance, for his grandfather,

Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, visited England in Queen Victoria's day, and his father, Debendranath Tagore, is known as Maharshi or Great Sage, a term of honour and veneration. One of his brothers was the first Indian to enter the Indian Civil Service. As a young man Tagore - he is now some fifty years old - came to England to study law, but he found it uncongenial, and he returned home and began writing those lyrics which have made him famous and inculcating his philosophical ideas in numerous essays and books which have gained him a place among the foremost teachers and thinkers of his land. He is a poet and sage in one, and at Bolepur, near Calcutta, he has a large open-air school attended by some 200 pupils, a sort of oriental lyceum, where his own distinctive doctrines are taught. He has been called the prophet of Indian nationalism, but this does not mean that he is a political agitator. He aims at awakening the spiritual consciousness of his nation, and his belief is not that Britain and India are antagonistic but they are bound together and have a high destiny to fulfil in common.

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17 November, 1913

**NORTHERN WHIG**

p6r 5-7(D)

### A VOICE FROM THE EAST

No question has been harder driven in our days than the line which proclaims that "East is East and West is West, and never that twain shall meet." On the lips of its admirers it has become a sublimation of all philosophy, an excuse for the worst kind of mental laziness, a justification of all sorts of fanatical prejudices. Those who murmur the jingle most complacently take it for granted that its author meant by it exactly what they imply, forgetting that in Mr. KIPLING's poem it serves merely to point the moral that

"There is neither East nor West,

Border no Breed no Birth,

When two strong men stand face to face,

though they come from the ends of  
the earth "

All history shows that the moral embodies the deeper truth. It would ill become those who have garnered their highest wisdom from the East to declare that the gulf that divides Asia from Europe is impossible to bridge. If that were so, then the Bible would be a sealed book, for, though its majestic prose may be of English coinage, the spirit it expresses is that of Hebrew poetry. Down through the centuries it is the meeting of East and West, not their severance, that has proved most fruitful to civilisation. That contact was never as close as it is to-day, and the breaking down of barriers, the new effort to understand cannot fail to produce memorable results. Some of these have already manifested themselves in the arts, and a painter to-day may never have seen a Japanese colour-print, yet his work will be subtly influenced by HOKUSAI and HARUNOBU. We have learned that rhythmic vitality can be as suggestive as symmetry and accurate imitation, that, though the methods of the East break every rule handed down to us from the Greeks, their masterpieces are quite as much as were those of Hellas "the expression of a harmony of life, a fine balance of all the forces of the human spirit". In letters we are witnessing a similar transformation. If Rig-Veda, as the Zend-Avesta, are not yet popular reading, then importance is appreciated as never before. We study with new zest Japanese poetry and Chinese drama, recognising below superficial differences of form a similarity of intention that links them up to work inspired by another artistic tradition.

For the most part of Eastern influences have been filtered through Western minds, but within the last few days the attention of the average man, who as a rule pays little heed to these things, has been drawn to a poet who has flung a spell over the best minds of two civilisations. Money awards are no test of the value of poetry, yet the grant of the Nobel Prize to RABINDRANATH TAGORE is in itself a notable event in the history of literature. To those whose ideas have been moulded by MACAULAY, who believe that nothing good comes out of Bengal but "babu English", the decision of the judges will be a staggering blow. For here is a Bengali poet who writes English prose with a subtlety and delicacy of charm that few have rivalled, and has proved himself able to interpret as no

one before him the mind of the old world to the new. Yet Mr. TAGORE's greatest work has not been done for Western readers. He is one of the prophets who have found honour in their own country, and by his genius he has freed a whole literature from the shackles of a tyrannous tradition, and given it new force and impetus. In Bengal this is known as the "Age of RABINDRANATH"; as Mr. W. B. Yeats has told us, his poems do not "lie in little well-printed books upon ladies' tables, who turn the pages with indolent hands that they may sign over a life without meaning, which is yet all they can know of life, or be carried about by students at the universities, to be laid aside when the work of life begins, but as the generations pass travellers will hum them on the highway and men rowing upon the rivers." A musician as well as a poet and a sage, Mr. TAGORE's songs to-day are heard all over India, and are hailed as heralding the dawn of a new Renaissance.

Some of his admirers describe the poet as a prophet of nationalism, but his nationalism is of a spiritual not a political kind. He strives for ends that have little in common with Bengali ideals, of which we hear so much nowadays, a seer to whom the hidden beauty behind the appearances of things alone matters seeks a goal very different from that of the crude propagandist. Mysticism is the essence of Mr. TAGORE's message, and he is more concerned with the soul of India than with her material needs. Nor has he any of that provincialism which in India and Ireland alike has led fanatics to proclaim that all outside influences should be regarded as tainted. As a matter of fact his knowledge of Western letters has been the key that unlocked the prison in which Indian literature languished so long, and enabled him to accomplish a revaluation of Hindu poetry. In his latest volume of love songs, "The Gardener" which has been recently issued by Messrs. MACMILLAN, one finds that much of the inspiration is drawn from English writers. There are passages that suggest KEATS, others that have a tinge of ROSSETTI, while all critics have noticed that resemblance between the form of the lyrics and the version in the English Bible of "The Song of Solomon". Yet they are not imitations, not even adaptations, what each singer gave has been transformed in the poet's mind,

stamped with his personality, and touched with the spirit of his race. Translations, even such translations as Mr. TAGORE makes, cannot hope to convey the rhythm and associations of the original, yet these verses speak to the heart as well as to the brain. The emotion of love we are sometimes inclined to regard as a European privilege denied to the Asiatic, but here, from a score as fine, is a lyric that says as much in four lines as even good poets have said in four pages -

When she passed by me with quick steps  
the end of her skirt touched me.  
From the unknown island of a heart came  
sudden warm breath of spring  
A flutter of a flitting touch brushed me  
and vanished in a moment, like a torn  
flower petal blown in the breeze,  
It fell upon my heart like a sigh of her  
body and whisper of her heart

The Nobel judges have made some curious selections in the past, but if in honouring Mr. TAGORE they help to foster a wider appreciation of his genius something will have been done to realise the donor's ideal in founding the prize.

18 November, 1913

**THE ABERDEEN DAILY JOURNAL**

p4c5(D)

### **£8000 FOR AN INDIAN POET**

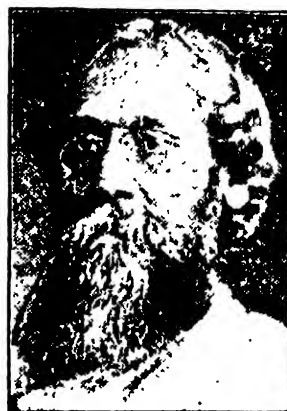
#### **WINNER OF NOBEL PRIZE**

The award of the Nobel Prize for Literature - a prize of nearly £8000 - to the Bengal poet, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, has stimulated curiosity and interest in his personality and his work.

Since the publication in London last year of his book of religious poems, "Gitangali" [sic], or "Song Offerings", Mr. Tagore, who is 52 years of age, has gained many admirers in this country. His literary fame is no longer confined to India, where for many years past his genius has won recognition. As an essayist Mr. Tagore is much appreciated, but it is the originality and beauty of

his lyrics that have stamped him as the most conspicuous figure in the literature of India to-day. Poet, playwright, Anglophil teacher, and educational reformer, Mr. Tagore has given abundant proof of versatility, and his influence has always been on the side of purity and idealism. To renew the best traditions of India through poetry, philosophy, and the arts, and to promote the blessings of true civilisation by blending the spiritual elements of East and West - these have been his high aims, and the bestowal of the Nobel prize is the seal of his success.

Mr. Tagore belongs to a Calcutta family, and his father was known as a Maharshi or saint, and the founder of a religious society which eventually became incorporated in the Brahmo Samaj. Several years ago Mr. Rabindranath Tagore started



Tagore.

Fig. 12

*Aberdeen Daily Journal*

18 November, 1913, p4

near Calcutta a school in which the training, conducted on a purely spiritual basis, is said to have most remarkable effect on the characters both of masters and pupils. Mr. Tagore wrote his first novel when 19, and even at that early age was famous in his own country. In his youth he came to England to study law, but the call of the Muses was

too strong to be resisted, and he went back to India to his verse, novels and plays. Last year Mr. Tagore visited England, and was entertained at dinner by a company of distinguished authors. Mr. W. B. Yeats, who presided on that occasion, paid a memorable tribute to the guest remarking - "I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language equal to Mr. Tagore's lyrics." "Gitangali" is in essence the song book of an Eastern mystic and a God-intoxicated poet. In No. 69 is the seer's song of triumphant love -

The same stream of life that runs through my  
veins night and day runs through the World and  
dances in rhythmic measures

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the  
dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and  
breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-  
cradle of birth and of the death, in ebb and in flow

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch  
of this world of life

And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing  
in my blood this moment

When in England last summer, Mr. Tagore gave a series of discourses soon to be published with the title of "Sadhana". On the occasion of his visit to this country our life struck him as too full of sensation, and of the fierce struggle for the immediate things - money and position - to allow us in full the grace of art, the peace needed for the spiritual life. The feeling will be found reflected in certain pages of "Sadhana", which breathe an unruffled calm and a faith unable to rest satisfied in a town-made life that leaves out of count the nurture of heart and soul. In order to appreciate this Indian poet, it is perhaps best to turn first to what is for us his newest book "The Gardener" is the expression of his youth, with the happiness of the lover, the gaiety of morning, and the passion of night in it. Its music and its charm may be gathered in this say of the young lover.

If you would have it so, I will end  
my singing

If it sets you a-flutter, I will take  
my eyes from your face

If it suddenly startles you in your  
walk, I will step aside and take  
another path

If it confuses you in your flower-  
weaving, I will shun your lovely  
garden

If it makes the water wanton and wild,  
I will not row my boat by your  
bank

"The Gardener" is not a book of mystical poems, but a lover's garland from an Indian garden. It is the simple utterance of a poet who has become the master-voice of a race whose thought and feeling he interprets with singular felicity and power. Most men have heard these questions from a woman; but were they ever more beautifully expressed -

Tell me if this be all true, my lover,  
tell me if this be true

Is it true that my lips are sweet,  
like the opening bud of the first conscious love?

Do the memories of banished months of May  
linger in my limbs?

Is it truth that your love travelled alone through  
ages and worlds in search of me?

That when you found me at last your age-long  
desire found utter peace in my gentle speech, and  
my eyes and lips and flowing hair?

Is it then true that the mystery of the Infinite is  
written on this little forehead of mine?

Tell me, my lover, if all this be true

.19 November, 1913

## THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

p137(V)

### Section: NOTES OF THE WEEK

#### Poetic Justice

The announcement that the Nobel prize for literature has this year been awarded to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore is a tribute to a supremely great literary artist which no one will wish to depreciate. Curiously enough, the only other British subject who has been awarded the Nobel prize is Mr. Rudyard Kipling. The fact would suggest that the latter's lines to the effect that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet", are swiftly losing whatever truth they may once have embodied. East is meeting West, and no one has done more to help us to realise the treasures of wisdom and beauty stored in the immemorial literature of the Indian race than Rabindranath Tagore. His prose poems were literally a revelation, and the reception given to them upon their publication in English, as well as by this latest recognition of the delicate and dream-like beauty of his work, is highly creditable to Western culture. The prize is worth nearly £8,000, but it is rather the single honour of being selected as its recipient than the pecuniary value of it that counts, in this case particularly.

192

THE SKETCH.

Nov. 19, 1913

WE TAKE OFF OUR HATS TO—

CAPTAIN HARWOOD—FOR  
NOT NEEDING OIL IN  
NAVIGATING THE CITY  
AS A FREEMAN.RABINDRANATH TAGORE—  
FOR WRITING NOBLE  
POETRY AND WINNING  
THEREBY A NOBEL PRIZE.KING FERDINAND OF  
BULGARIA—FOR FINDING  
"TO LET" PLACARDS  
PLACED ON HIS PALACE.MISS JESSIE WOODROW  
WILSON—FOR TURNING  
THIRTEEN INTO A LUCKY  
NUMBER.MR. LEOPOLD SALOMONS—  
FOR KEEPING BOX HILL  
FOR THE ENGLISH HOLI-  
DAY-MAKERS.

Captain C. E. Harwood, of the oil-tank steamer "Marragansett," who did such good service at the burning of the "Volturne," was recently made a Freeman of the City of London. --The 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature, worth about £5000, has been awarded to the famous Bengal poet, Rabindranath Tagore. --King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, it seems, is not on the best of terms with a section of his subjects. During his absence in Vienna, some placards were placed on his palace at Sofia announcing that it was "To Let." It is anticipated that

he will shortly abdicate. --Miss Jessie Wilson, daughter of the U.S.A. President, is to marry Mr. F. B. Sayre on Nov. 25. She will be the thirteenth White House bride, but is not superstitious about it, and on Nov. 13 attended a "thirteen" luncheon. Box Hill, recently threatened by the builder, has been saved as an open space by the munificence of Mr. Leopold Salomons, of Norbury Park, Dorking. He has bought, for many thousands of pounds, over 235 acres, which he intends to present to the nation.

Fig. 13 Tagore's photograph published in *The Sketch*  
19 November, 1913, p192

20 November, 1913

THE NEW AGE

p80(W)

## Section: READERS AND WRITERS

In these brebine days to him that hath shall be given and from him that hath not shall be taken away. The latest news of Mr. Tagore is that he is to receive the Nobel Prize for 1913. It is perhaps as well that the Committee that administers the funds of the deceased manufacturer should continue to make itself ridiculous, but why it should invariably do so passes my mathematics. Does it act under the advice of the British Academy? That would explain everything; for, as we know, the British Academy has a perfectly comprehensible spite against any living English. The stanzas quoted by the press - independently, of course, of each other - to justify Mr. Tagore's selection are these:

We do not stray out of all words into the ever  
silent,

We do not raise our hands to the void for thing  
beyond hope

It is enough that we give and we get

We have not crushed the joy to the utmost to  
wing

from it the wine of pain

This love between you and me is simple as a  
song

As Johnson said of Ossian, any one of us could write such stuff ad libitum; but nobody should be deceived into thinking it good English, good poetry, good sense, or good ethics. As a matter of fact the third clause of the stanza gives the lie to fourth. A lover capable of making such a protest is obviously too sophisticated to be capable of a simple love. Mr. Tagore is no baa-lamb.

R.H.C.

21 November, 1913

**T.P.'S WEEKLY**

pb73(W)

### **RABINDRANATH TAGORE THE NOBEL PRIZEWINNER**

This summer there was a man in our midst, a man living amongst us, walking our London streets, who would seem to the casual observer to belong not to the present at all, but to the past or the future. He came to us over the sea, but to look at him one would imagine that he came to us over the ages. This tall, straight man, with his flowing beard, his erect head, his kingly bearing, and his proud, fearless eyes which yet have in them a gentle look, makes one believe that he must surely have stepped out of those far dim days of Arthurian legend, when the strong thought it no shame to serve the weak, when the wise taught the ignorant instead of deceiving them, and when the glory of knighthood lay in the earning of it, not in its possession.

But even if he were neither tall nor straight, his magnificently calm expression, his wonderful air of serene repose would attract one's attention in these days of much petty hurry. When first I say Rabindranath Tagore, I was reminded irresistibly of Walt Whitman's famous lines:

"We few equals, indifferent of lands, indifferent of times,

We, enclosers of all continents, all castes, allowers of all theologies,

Compassionaters, perceivers, rapport of men,

We walk silent among disputers and assertions, but reject not the disputers not anything that is asserted,

We hear the bawling and din, we are reach'd at by divisions, jealousies, recriminations on every side.

They close peremptorily upon us to surround us, my comrade,

Yet we walk unheld, free, the whole earth over, journeying up and down till we make our ineffaceable mark upon time and the diverse eras,

Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and women of races, ages to come, may prove brethren and lovers as we are."

In England, Tagore is known chiefly as a poet, particularly through "Gitanjali" (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net.), and W. B. Yeats has said that he is "not only a great poet – if not the greatest poet at the present time in the world – but he is a great saint, and his religious lyrics are known and sung all over Bengal." But he is more than that. In his own country he is a prominent thinker and a great reformer. He has had a very large share in the making of modern Bengal, and, through his activities at Bengal, of modern India.

His family is known and respected far and wide. Rabindranath, the youngest son, was the favourite of his father, the great Maharshi; and when his father used to go away for days together along the bank of the river, or in a boat, or up into the hills, for the purpose of deep meditation, Rabindranath was given the privilege of accompanying him, and thus from his earliest boyhood he came continually into touch with Nature. The beauty of Nature, his father's stern discipline, and his own genius are the apparent forces which have been working to produce the poet, whose lyrics rank with the finest of the old Indian folk-songs, and are frequently mistaken for them by the Indian children. He is now not only a great poet, but also a musician, an educationist, and a great reformer. And yet he is so gentle, and of so amiable a temperament, that he can rarely refuse a request.

He has learnt very little of the science of music, but by means of his genius in that direction, and his soul-stirring voice, he can attract hundreds of people. In India, he is one of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, and at the anniversary festivals, when it is known that Rabindranath Tagore will sing, devotees from different parts of Bengal, and young men and women from all the surrounding villages, throng to hear him. He has also a great gift for public speaking, and frequently addresses large gatherings in and around Bengal. Mystics, and poets, too, are often said to be dreamers, but the activities of this man, who is mystic and poet both, are remarkable. For instance, the work to which he has already given his heart, is a large and successful school which he has at Bholpur! With regard to his sociological work, I think he might almost be called a Socialist; but if so,

then, in this sense, Socialism has always been the ideal of India. Tagore says:

"It has always been the chief endeavour of India to establish a bond of kinship with every man whom we meet in life. In no case can we regard a human being as a mere machine for executing our purpose.

"India cannot forget the charm of human relations in the midst of business. The Hindu religion has pointed out the path by which each individual can be made to transcend his petty home or village, and feel his affinity with the Universe. Every Hindu is bound to perform daily the 'five offerings,' and these recall to his mind his beneficent kinship with the gods, the sages, his ancestry, the human race, and the beasts and birds."

Those who have read "Gitanjali" will be pleased to hear that Mr. Tagore is shortly going to bring out another book which will contain the lectures delivered in London this summer, and also eight essays, the titles of which will be as follows:-

- (1) The Relation of the Individual to the Universe.
- (2) Soul-Consciousness.
- (3) The Problem of Evil.
- (4) The Problem of Self.
- (5) Realisation in Love.
- (6) Realisation in Beauty.
- (7) Realisation of the Finite.
- (8) Realisation of the Infinite.

For the benefit of idealists, social reformers, and others who have not read any of Rabindranath Tagore's works, I will quote here a verse from "Gitanjali":

"Where the mind is without fear and  
the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not broken itself  
up into fragments by narrow  
domestic walls,  
Where words come out from the depth  
of Truth:  
Where tireless striving reaches its  
arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has

not lost its way into the dreary  
desert sand of dry habit,  
Where the mind is led forward by  
Thee into ever-widening thought  
and action,  
Into that haven of Freedom, O Lord,  
let my country awake!

**JASPER SMITH**

*21 November, 1913*

**THE YORKSHIRE OBSERVER**

p7c6(W)

**Section : LITERATURE**

**RECENT VERSE**

**The Gardener. By Rabindranath Tagore.**  
(Macmillan & Co. Limited, 4s. 6d. )

Emotions, intuitions, imagery - if these are the native elements of poetry, the Nobel prize has been well awarded to Rabindranath Tagore as a poet of the year. The wealth and sweetness of his songs perhaps impress us the more because they have the strange freshness of foreign fruit. They do not, as so much English poetry does, draw their inspiration from Greece. They are unrhymed and not fettered by set measures. Although love is their constant theme, there is not a hint throughout the volume of the existence of sex problems or a woman question.

This love between you and me is as simple as a song, sings the lover, and the song is as simple as young love

Your veil of the saffron colour makes my eyes drunk. The jasmine wreath that you wove me thrills to my heart like praise

It is a game of giving and withholding, revealing and screening again, some smiles and some little shyness, and some sweet, struggles

It is enough what we give and what we get

We have not crushed the joy to the utmost to wring from it the wine of pain

life-impulse. The other may run. "Yes, but what difference does that make? One knew it all along."

True. Once stated, it is almost self-evident. We constantly assume it in action. Our speech, even, is in a measure moulded to it. But it is one of those truths that one knows, as it were, without knowing. It is not applied, or sufficiently borne in mind as a sort of ballast for sailing the confused seas of social controversy. Nor is it a philosophy dragged into the subject; the worker's ordinary talk is curiously saturated with it. Life, not wealth—or economics, the science of it—is his home port for adventuring forth on social discussion; and into terms of it he insists on translating everything. Lead him adrift, and back he comes. "That's all very well, but how does it work out in life?"

In a succession of articles, I propose to examine some current political, economic, and social questions from that standpoint.

STEPHEN REYNOLDS.

## Short Studies.

### SHYĀMĀ

"There from the king's treasury!" the cry ran through the town. The thief must be found, or there will be trouble for the officer of the guards.

Vajrasen, a stranger from a foreign port, came to sell horses in the town, and, robbed by a band of robbers of all his earnings, was lying in a ruined temple outside the walls. They charged him with the theft, chained him, and led him through the streets to the prison.

Proud Shyāmā, of a perilous charm, sat in her balcony idly watching the passing crowd. Suddenly she shuddered and cried to her attendant, "Alas, who is that godlike young man with a noble face, led in chains, like a common thief? Ask the officer in my name to bring him in before me."

The chief of the guards came with the prisoner and said to Shyāmā, "Your favor is untimely, my lady, I must hasten to do the king's bidding."

Vajrasen quickly raised his head and broke out, "What caprice is this of yours, fair one, to bring me in from the street to mock me with your cruel curiosity?"

"Mock you!" cried Shyāmā. "I could gladly take your chains upon my limbs in exchange for my jewels." Then, turning to the officer, she said, "Take all the money I have, and set him free."

He bowed and said, "It cannot be. A victim we must have to stay the king's wrath."

"I ask only two days' respite for the prisoner," urged Shyāmā. The officer smiled and consented.

On the end of his second night in prison, Vajrasen said his prayers, and sat waiting for his last moment, when suddenly the door opened and the woman appeared with a lamp in her hand, and at her signal the guard unchained the prisoner.

"You come to me with that lamp, merciful woman," said he, "like the dawn with her morning star after a night of delirious fever."

"Merciful indeed!" Shyāmā cried, and broke out in a wild laughter, till tears came with a burst, and she sobbed and said, "There is no stone brick in this prison-tower harder than this woman's heart." And clutching the prisoner's hand, she dragged him out of the gates.

On the Varunā's bank the sun rose. A boat was waiting at the landing. "Come to the boat with me, stranger youth," Shyāmā said, "only know that I have cut all my bonds, and I drift in the same boat with you."

Swiftly the boat glided on. Merrily sang the birds. "Tell me, my love," asked Vajrasen, "what untold wealth did you spend to buy my freedom?"

"Hush, not now," said Shyāmā.

Morning wore on to noon. Village women had

the river bank, and vanished in the vague of the woods like a dream merging into sleep, and Vajrasen, with aching heart, sat silent in the boat.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

over. The village path gated in the sun and moon. In the warm gusts of the noontide wind Shyāmā's veil dropped from her face. Vajrasen murmured to her ears, "You freed me from a bond that was brief to bind me in a bond everlasting. Let me know how it was done." The woman drew her veil over her face and said, "Not now, my beloved."

The day waned, and it darkened. The breeze died away. The crescent moon glimmered feebly at the edge of the steel-black water.

Shyāmā sat in the dark, resting her head on the youth's shoulder. Her hair fell loose on his arms. "What I did for you was hard, beloved," she said in a faint whisper, "but it is harder to tell you. I shall tell it in few words. It was the love-sick boy Uttiya, who took your place, charging himself with the theft, and making me a present of his life. My greatest sin has been committed for the love of you, my best beloved."

While she spoke the crescent moon had set. The stillness of the forest was heavy with the sleep of countless birds. Slowly the youth's arm slipped from the woman's waist. Silence round them became hard and cold as a stone.

Suddenly the woman fell at his feet and clung to his knees crying, "Forgive me, my lord. Leave it to my God to punish me for my sin."

Snatching his feet away, Vajrasen hoarsely cried, "That my life should be bought by the price of a sin! that every breath of mine should be accursed!"

He stood up and leapt from the boat on to the bank, and entered the forest. He walked on and on till the path closed, and the dense trees, tangled with creepers, stopped him with fearful fantastic gestures. Tired, he sat on the ground. But who was it that followed him in silence the long dark way, and stood at his back like a phantom?

"Will you not leave me?" shouted Vajrasen. In a moment the woman fell upon him with an impetuous flood of caresses, with her tumbling hair and trailing robes, with her showering kisses and panting breath she covered him all over. In a voice choked with pent-up tears, she said, "No, no, I shall never leave you. I have sinned for you. Strike me if you will, kill me with your own hands."

The still blackness of the forest shivered for a moment, a horror ran through the twisting roots of trees underground. A groan and a smothered breath rose through the night, and a body fell down upon the withered leaves.

The morning sun flashed on the far-away spire of the temple when Vajrasen came out of the woods. He wandered in the hot sun the whole day by the river on the sandy waste, and never rested for a moment.

In the evening he limply went back to the boat. There on the bed lay an anklet. He clutched it, and pressed it to his heart till it bruised him. He fell prone upon the blue mantle left lying in a heap in the corner, hid his face in its folds, and from its silken touch and evanescent fragrance struggled to absorb into his being the memory of a dear living body.

The night abook with a tense and tingling silence. The moon hid behind the trees. Vajrasen stood up and stretched out his arms towards the woods, and madly called, "Come, my love, come!"

Suddenly a figure came out of the darkness, and stood on the brink of the water.

"Come, love, come!"

"I have come, my beloved. Your dear hands failed to kill me. It is my doom to live."

Shyāmā came and stood before the youth. He looked at her face, he moved a step to take her to his arms—then thrust her away with both hands and cried, "Why, oh why, did you come back?"

He shut his eyes, turning his face, and said, "Go, go, leave me."

For a minute the woman stood silent before she knelt at his feet, and bowed low. Then she rose and went up

weapon of injured coquetry, it seems good to use a rollicking Aristophanic humor, rather than a finely pointed wit. But essentially, of course, Mr Shaw means us to take Captain Edistaston of George III's Light Dragoons as a type of Major Jones of George V's Heavy Cavalry, and to show in the gallant soldier who declines

Fig. 14 Tagore's story in *The Nation*

22 November, 1913, p356-357

And the loved one asks:

Tell me if this be all true, my lover tell me if this  
be true ...

Do the memories of banished months of May  
linger in my limbs?

Does the earth, like a harp, shiver into songs  
with the touch of my feet?

Is it then true that the dewdrops fall from the  
eyes of night when I am seen, and the morning light  
is glad when it wraps my body round?

Is it true, is it true, that your love travelled alone  
through ages and worlds in search of me?

What could our feminists answer to this poet?  
For he sings only to woman as she has been:-

You could humble at your feet the proudest heads  
in the world.

But it is your loved ones, unknown to fame, whom  
you choose to worship, therefore I worship you

The perfection of your arms would add glory to  
kingly splendour with their touch.

But you use them to sweep away the dust, and  
too make clean your humble home, therefore I am  
filled with awe

We turn pages vainly for something to criticise  
or appraise; we can only enjoy, and struggle to  
resist the temptation to quote. One more song only,  
then:-

Reverend sir, forgive this pair of sinners

Spring winds to-day are blowing in wild eddies,  
driving dust and dead leaves away, and with them  
your lessons are all lost

Do not say, father, that life is a vanity

For we have made a truce with death for once,  
and only for a few fragrant hours we two have been  
made immortal ..

If friendly people came and flocked around us,  
we should humbly bow to them and say

This extravagant good fortune is an embarrass-  
ment to us. Room is scarce in the finite sky where  
we dwell. For in the springtime flowers come in crowds,  
and the busy wings of bees jostle each other. Our  
little heaven, where dwell only we two immortals, is  
too absurdly narrow.

The reader must not be left with the impression  
that love-songs so exquisite are all the book con-  
tains. Friendship and childhood find a place, and  
joy is not the only note. But the intellectual appeal  
is of the slightest. One does not miss it, yet there  
are moods in which, at least with English readers,  
other singers would have on that account more  
acceptance.

22 November, 1913

### THE BAZAAR, EXCHANGE AND MART

p1083 (2W)

.. The Indian Poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who has  
been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature - a sum  
of about £8000 this year - was born rather than  
half a century ago. He is an example of the school  
boy who does not like school, and prefers to read  
books in the running brooks and sermons in stones.  
To such good purpose did he do this that he has a  
wide reputation, not only as a poet, but as a phi-  
losopher as well. What is perhaps more strange is  
that he carries on a large school at Bolepur, near  
Calcutta, and teaches his pupils in the open air.

In the face of Mr Tagore's great success - for  
the Nobel Prizes are not awarded for nothing or to  
please a coterie of log-rollers - attention may well  
be directed to his recently published volume of verse,  
entitled "The Gardener". Mr Tagore wrote this in  
Bengali, and has translated it himself into English,  
which he speaks fluently, having lived in London  
for some years. "The Gardener", then, is the book  
of the hour, and the critics with an eye on the  
Nobel award are praising it, though every reader  
should judge for himself in matters of this kind.  
"The Gardener" is published by Messrs Macmillan  
and Co. at 4s. 6d. net.

26 November, 1913

**PALL MALL GAZETTE**

p5c2-3 DE

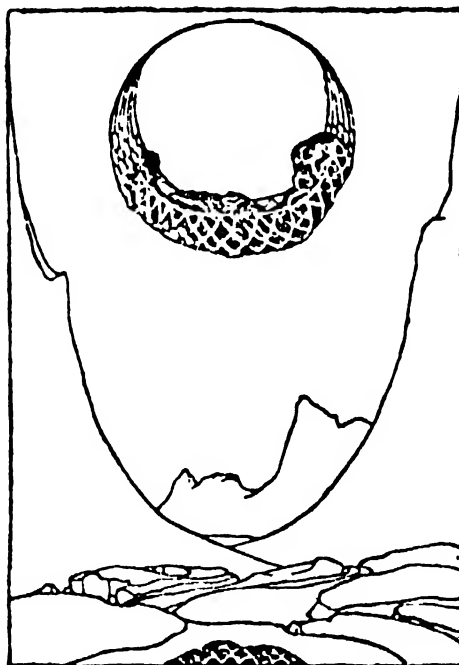
**THE POET AND THE CHILD**

**"The Crescent Moon", By Rabindranath Tagore (London; Macmillan.) 4s.6d. net.**

The new Nobel Laureate should be a godsend to the publishers, considering the long accumulation of his poems; and, if the reading world is equal to the ordeal, there are many epics of Mr. Tagore's stored away in the native memory which should keep the printing-presses busy for years to come. Here, however, is nothing lengthy nothing that taxes the memory. It is a new revelation of the poet-mind, and it says something new and unexpected where so many complacent grown-ups believed there was nothing more to be said. We mean that strange region the child-mind, and one which some few of us know to be far from being really exploited or explored. And thus the child-mind is the one piece on the map of human psychology which deserves to be marked off as white for more reasons than one.

Mr. Tagore, we take it, has worked from memory and intuition as well. A deeply reflective and retentive mind like his must treasure up many things from childhood that no child ever yet had the power of expressing. A father, with his powers of observation, must have renewed all these images by close association with children of his own. And so true a poet, living so completely in the inner world of the spirit and its profound simplicities, cannot fail to touch many half-forgotten chords within us whenever he is moved to speak through the lips of a child and address himself to the wonders and the riddles of the world. In these translations of some

forty lyrics he touches once more the national and authentic spirit of Indian speech with an artlessness that is not far short of genius, but it is the effortless and searching character of his thought that appeals to us, and not the method of expression, however beautiful. Reading these things over in a spirit of enjoyment that has no critical misgivings, one is moved to quote and quote, and leave the extracts undiscussed, so that the reader may take each gem and set it in appropriate commentary for himself. Here, for instance, are a few pieces that strike us in the course of a book which contains in a modest compass many similar things:



**THE CRESCENT MOON.**

[From the cover design by Mr. T. Sturge Moore.]

**Fig. 15**

*Pall Mall Gazette* 26 November, 1913, p5

"Where have I come from, where did you pick me up?" the baby asked its mother.

She answered half crying, half laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast -

"You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling

"In all my hopes and my loves, in my life, in the life of my mother you have lived.

"When in girlhood my heart was opening its petals, you hovered as a fragrance about it

"Your tender softness bloomed in my youthful limbs, like a glow in the sky before sunrise

"Heaven's first darling, twin-born with the morning light, you have floated down the stream of the world's life, and at last you have stranded on my heart"

\*\*\*

Mother, I really think the flowers go to school underground

They do their lessons with doors shut, and if they want to come out to play before it is time, their master makes them stand in a corner

When the rains come they have their holidays

\*\*\*

Mother, I do want to leave off my lessons now I have been at my book all the morning

You say it is only twelve o'clock. Suppose it isn't any later; can't you ever think it is afternoon when it is only twelve o'clock?

If twelve o'clock can come in the night, why can't  
the night come when it is twelve o'clock?

\* \* \*

What nice stories, mother, you can tell us! Why  
can't father write like that, I wonder?

Did he never hear from his own mother stories  
of giants and fairies and princesses?

Has he forgotten them all?

When my father wastes such heaps of paper,  
mother, you don't seem to mind at all

But if I take only one sheet to make a boat with,  
you say, "Child, how troublesome you are!"

What do you think of father's spoiling sheets and  
sheets of paper with black marks all over on both  
sides?

\* \* \*

I saw the postman bringing letters in his bag for  
almost everybody in the town

Only, father's letters he keeps to read himself I  
am sure the postman is a wicked man

When I finish my writing, do you think I shall be  
so foolish as father and drop it into the horrid post-  
man's bag?

I shall bring it to you myself without waiting,  
and letter by letter help you to read my writing

I know the postman does not like to give you the  
really nice letters

\* \* \*

There are many flashes of insight which we cannot in fairness detach from their context, such as "the lightning scratches the sky with its nails," and the world's "a land of a hundred cross-roads." But little we have stolen enough from Mr. Tagore's little casket, and we are so far from penitence that we wish we could also borrow one of the quaintly symbolical colour-drawings which go to illustrate the book through the pencils of native artists, some of them members of Mr. Tagore's own family. Instead we give a fragment of the cover design by Mr. T. Sturge Moore, poet and kindred spirit, to whom the book is dedicated.

—

27 November, 1913

**THE GLOBE**

p8c3 (DE)

**Section : TO-DAY'S BOOK  
FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM  
"THE CRESCENT MOON".\***  
(PUBLISHED TODAY)

Whether Rabindranath Tagore is indeed one of the world's great poets time alone can show. It is impossible for his contemporaries to see his work in the perspective of posterity or fix the place in literature which it will ultimately fill. But we can at least be certain that he is an authentic voice. When the "Gitanjali" was published in the poet's own pellucid English it was recognised at once that a new force had appeared, that here was at the vision of a true seer. This man, we felt, saw into the core of things, and give new values to all that came within his range. To question the newness of his gospel was possible; to doubt its truth, impossible; yet its precepts seemed as hard to follow as did the words of a great teacher to the young man of great possessions who listened and "went away sorrowful."

**THE CHILD-MIND**

In the "Crescent Moon" Rabindranath Tagore offers a revelation more profound and more subtle than that in the "Gitanjali." He opens to us the child-mind - that mind which all of us have possessed, and all save an inspired few have long ago forgotten. The Greeks forgot it because they never ceased to be children, and there is nothing a child forgets so soon as the being he was a year ago; in the Hebrews - in all but One - it was smothered beneath the deceitfulness of riches, and even to the great Apostle of the Gentiles it seemed a thing to be "put away."

How far the Oriental in general, with his conception of personality so different from our own, has kept hold upon this wonderful thing we do not know. Rabindranath Tagore may be as unique in the eyes of the East as he is in those of the West, or he may be only the interpreter to us of his own

\*"The Crescent Moon", by Rabindranath Tagore  
Translated from the original Bengali by the author  
(Macmillan and Co., 4s. 6d. net).

race. We cannot tell. But at least we can be certain that this revelation of the child-mind is richer, more complete, more convincing than any of which we have had previous knowledge. It is a great thing to have the power of perfect expression; it is a greater to be able to apply it to the thoughts and dreams of innocence, "for of such" it has been written, "is the Kingdom of Heaven."

### MOTHER AND BABY

What the baby says to his mother is one of the mysteries of childhood. Rabindranath Tagore strives again and again to reveal it, but never, we think, with greater success than in the exquisite little idyll called "The Champa Flowers."

Supposing I became a champa flower, just for fun, and grew on a branch high up that tree, and shook in the wind with laughter and danced upon the newly-budded leaves, would you know me, mother?

You would call, "Baby, where are you?" and I should laugh to myself and keep quite quiet.

I should slowly open my petals and watch you at your work

When after your bath, with wet hair spread on your shoulders, you walked through the shadow of the champa tree to the little court where you say your prayers, you would notice the scent of the flower, but not know that it came from me.

When after the midday meal you sat at the window reading "Ramayana" and the tree's shadow fell over your hair and your lap, I should fling my wee little shadow on to the page of your book, just where you were reading

But would you guess that it was the tiny shadow of your little child?

Everyone knows how a child gilds his commonplace surrounding with the wealth of his imagination: how he sees dragons in the water-butt, where, indeed, they are many and fierce; tigers in the hay-field; and princesses – princesses, as Mr. Kenneth Graham, would say, "of the right sort" – in the woodshed. But has the curious power to "make-believe" while not really believing ever been more beautifully or more perfectly expressed than in this little verse?:

The princess lies sleeping on the far-away shore  
of the seven impassable seas

There is none in the world who can find her but myself.

She has bracelets on her arms and pearl drops in her ears; her hair sweeps down upon the floor.

She will wake when I touch her with my magic wand, and jewels will fall from her lips when she smiles.

But let me whisper in your ear, mother; she is there in the corner of our terrace where the pot of the tulsi plant stands.

### THOUGHTS ON DEATH

"Lusiasti satis": Rabindranath Tagore has not forgotten that even in the heart of the child there is "blind desire. In his eyes fore-knowledge of death." Children, without being at all morbid, muse upon death much more than we imagine:

I shall become a dream, and through the little opening of your eyelids I shall slip into the depths of your sleep, and when you wake up and look round startled, like a twinkling firefly I shall flit out into the darkness.

When, on the great festival of puja, the neighbours' children come and play about the house, I shall melt into the music of the flute and throb in your heart all day.

Dear Auntie will come with puja-presents and will ask, "Where is our baby, sister?" Mother, you will tell her softly, "He is in the pupils of my eyes, he is in my body and in my soul."

That is expressed in a form beyond the power of any child to command, but that it truly reveals what every child occasionally thinks and feels we cannot doubt.

The poems before us make altogether a book of less than a hundred pages of large print, yet they depict every phase of the child's imagination. Their richness and beauty will be sufficiently obvious from the examples we have given, and these qualities are even more apparent when the poet turns from childhood itself to gaze upon the motherhood which enfolds it.

"Where have I come from, where did you pick me up?" the baby asked its mother.

She answered half crying, half laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast –

"You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling.

"You were in the dolls of my childhood's games; and when with clay I made the image of my god every morning, I made and unmade you then.

"You were enshrined with our household deity, in his worship I worshipped you.

"In all my hopes and my loves, in my life, in the life of my mother you had lived."

"You were in the dolls of my childhood's games." There is the secret of the eternal storage, the maternal impulse pressing ever upon the mother that is to be. A girl-child playing with her doll is a great mystery: it is the coming into operation of that divine force which compels us to reject a merely mechanical explanation of Nature.

### THE POET'S PURPOSE.

Every poet seeks to explain himself, knowing that no one else can undertake the task. In the work of Rabindranath Tagore such self-explanation is constant, and is, perhaps, one of the chief secrets of his power

I stopped for a moment in my lonely way under the starlight, and saw spread before me the darkened earth surrounding with her arms countless homes furnished with cradles and beds, mothers' hearts and evening lamps, and young lives glad with a gladness that knows nothing of its value for the world.

In these poems it is his purpose to expound the "gladness that knows nothing of its value for the world," and he has succeeded. Not the least wonderful thing about his success is that it has been achieved in an alien language. Few Englishmen have such a command over their own tongue as is possessed by this inspired Bengali.

4 December, 1913

### EVENING STANDARD AND ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE

p(viii)c2(DE)

### FAIRY TALES

The Crescent Moon, by Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan, 4s.6d.), is, of course, another Eastern production. Tagore's delicate gift comes out strongly in the little wistful sketches of childhood, especially in the one called "The Beginning", "Where have I come from" asks the baby "You were hidden in my heart as its desire", the mother answers, "you were in the dolls of my child's games and when with clay I made the image of my god every morning I made and unmade you then" The book does strictly belong among fairy-tales, but it is of a magical world that it tells.

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6 December, 1913

### THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST

p8c7(D)

### LITERATURE OF THE DAY

### EX ORIENTE LUX

During the last three or four months the Bengali poems of Rabindranath Tagore, translated by himself into English, have been attracting in an extraordinary manner the attention of the reading public. Their excellence has been praised again and again in newspaper and magazine, with no dissentient voice. Just when the readers of literary reviews were beginning to get over their surprise that translations of Asiatic poems should be greeted as masterpiece of English literature, the award of the Nobel prize to their author revealed the fact that his reputation was not confined within the limits of England, but had overflowed to the European Continent, where his poems must have been chiefly read in the form of translations of translations. When we consider the immense difficulty, or, as some would maintain, the impossibility, of adequately translating poetry from one language to another, when we remember that the great epics

and dramas of Sanskrit literature have never been so translated as to become properly appreciated by lovers of poetry in England or any other European country, the eagerness with which Mr. Tagore's translations are being welcomed by thousands of readers is somewhat astounding, and is all the more remarkable when the character of the poems is taken into consideration. For they are mystical and frequently obscure, and are ended with a subtle charm of thought and melody which could hardly be expected to command the applause of large numbers of readers.

So far three volumes of Mr. Tagore's poems have appeared at short intervals - first, the "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings), with an introduction by Mr. Yeats; then the "Gardener" (lyrics of Love and Life); and lately, the "Crescent Moon." As they are all lyrical and express the thoughts or feelings of the author, they will be of great interest to the biographical historian of literature from the light they throw upon the personality of the author. They should be taken one after the other in the opposite order to that of their publication. For the "Crescent Moon" treats of child-life, and gives the fancies of the author when he was a little boy; the "Gardener" mainly consists of love songs; the "Gitanjali" is pervaded by the deep religious spirit that came when advancing years brought the philosophic mind. A prose counterpart to the "Gitanjali" is provided by the "Sadhana," a collection of lectures lately delivered in London by Mr. Tagore on the relation of the individual soul to the Infinite and other kindred subjects. The poetry of the "Gitanjali" is, like most mystical poetry, capable of different interpretations, varying according to the mind of the reader. Those to whom it seems obscure may often find the key to the symbolism in the prose of the "Sadhana," so that it is well to study the two works side by side. We are often struck by the close resemblance between the main ideas of Mr. Tagore's philosophy and those expressed in the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson. When the poet prays that he "may never lose the bliss of the touch of the one in the play of the many," and speaks of the infinite sky where "reigns the stainless white radiance," the very language irresistibly reminds us of the conclusion of the "Adonais." The "Sadhana," in the spirit of Tennyson's "Palace of Art," condemns whomsoever

is inclined to give himself up to "some secluded enjoyment of his own imaginings, away from the sky-towering temple of the greatness of humanity which the whole of mankind, in sunshine and storm, is toiling to erect through the ages." But it is above all with Wordsworth that Mr. Tagore is in agreement. They both take an extremely optimistic view of nature and they express the same ideas about duty, and the relation of man to nature and the infinite power manifested through nature as Love. This similarity is, however, not due to imitation, for the poetical metaphysic of the "Gitanjali" is clearly traced in the "Sadhana" to its origin in the "Upanishads," the wisdom of which the poet at an early age imbibed from his father's teaching. Other points of similarity between Eastern and Western poetry are due to those touches of nature that make the whole world kin. The Indian child whose fancies are depicted in the "Crescent Moon" is very like little boys and girls in England. He sees the watchman swinging his lantern in the dark and lonely lane with the same rest and fascination with which Stevenson's boy watches Leerie, the lamplighter, going by with ladder and light.

Mr. Tagore's translations of his Bengali poems are written in rhythmical prose, like Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" and the Authorised Version of the Psalms and the Prophets. Professor Mackail has taught us to look for patterns in the language of poetry. The pattern that we find in Mr. Tagore's poems is not that of rhymes and regular metre, but rather a rhythm of sense, something like the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, but less regular. That is to say, there is frequent repetition of similar thoughts or different expressions of the same thought all combining in perfect harmony with the main idea of each poem. In the "Crescent Moon" and the "Gardener" a refrain is frequently employed to give a distinct frame-work to the poems. This has something of the effect of the repetition of lines in the triolet, as may be seen in the following love song:

Do not go, my love, without asking my leave  
 I have watched all night, and now my eyes are  
 heavy with sleep,  
 I fear lest I loss you when I am sleeping  
 Do not go, my love, without asking my leave  
 I start up and stretch my hands to touch you.

I ask myself, "Is it a dream?"  
 Could I but entangle your feet with my heart,  
 and hold them fast to my breast!  
 Do not go, my love, without asking my leave

In the "Gitanjali," the poems in which were composed at a later date, the refrain is dispensed with, and the unity and melody of the lyrics depend on a less distinct but more perfect harmony of sense and rhythm. Freedom from the trammels of rhymes and metric systems gives these Indian poems a kind of flower-like grace such as can seldom be found in European poetry. There is a similar absence of definite form in the matter of the poems. The landscapes are seldom depicted in detail, and the characters of the persons introduced are types rather than individuals. There is a singular softness, an absence of harshness and angularity, about the poems which would make stiff and unnatural in their bonds of rhyme and metre. This is, indeed, a general feature of Indian poetry, which is most strikingly manifested in the "Sakuntala" of Kalidas, and gives something of an invertebrate character even to the great Sanskrit epics.

The chief significance of Mr. Tagore's triumph is that it marks the culmination of the development of an offshoot of English literature the importance of which has not been sufficiently recognised. Indian-English poetry cannot well be ignored henceforward, seeing that two of its representatives have been the only English authors who have won the annual Nobel prize for literature. The world must now awaken to the fact that English literature has made great progress in India. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his "Light of Asia," was the first English poet who was able from personal experience to give an adequate representation of India. He was followed by Sir Alfred Lyall, Kipling, and Professor Bain of Poona. Nor have the natives of India been behindhand in celebrating their native land in English verse. First came Toru Dutt, the Bengali poetess, who was cut off by an untimely death before her genius had time to mature. Yet her story of Savitri, the Indian Alceste, and her other "Ballads and Legends of Hindostan," have won an honourable place in English literature. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, of Haidrabad, has produced lyrics, passionate and pathetic, that can hold their own in comparison with the work of any English poetess. Mr. Pal, a pleader of Bombay, has told in the smoothest

of blank verse a legendary story of the great Indian king Vikram. Mr. Romesh Dutt has given us excellent poetical translations of the "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata." Good poems have also been written in English by Manmohun Ghose and Gcece C. Dutt, the author of "Cherry Stones." When to all this large and excellent output of excellent work we add the poetry of Mr. Tagore, we have a large amount of good verse that may rival the productions of the English muse in Australia, Canada, or America. This development of English literature in Asia is likely to assume much larger dimensions in the future. India, in spite of religious and racial differences, is gradually acquiring national sentiment, but has no national language of her own. The Bombay Maratha cannot understand the Bengali poems of Mr. Tagore, nor can the Bengali understand Sindhi, Gujarathi, Canarese, or the Dravidian languages of Southern India. Thus it is that the English language is in India what Latin was for many centuries in Europe. It is the only means of communication between the educated Indians all over the peninsula, and, consequently, if a great renaissance of national literature takes place in India, it must almost necessarily be in the English language.

J.M.

6 December, 1913

### THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p7c3-5(D)

[This is the relevant portion of a long article incorporating the review of Andrie Gide's "Pretextes" and a general discussion on Tagore's works]

### BOOKS AND BOOKMEN

There is little doubt that what some people are largely calling the "Indian Renaissance," but which may be better described as the rise of Mr. Tagore upon the West, is, as yet, the most striking event in the poetry of the century. The contrast between the work of Kipling and Tagore, the two English recipients of the Nobel Prize, is too obvious to dwell on, but one might almost think that Tagore had been raised up for the express purpose of refuting Kipling's best-known line, "East is East and West is West, and never

the twain shall meet." Here is a member of a race different from our own, of a civilisation not only different but antithetic, one summed up in the word "meditation" as ours is in the word "energy," and yet no sooner do the accents of his voice fall upon the ears of the Western peoples than they recognise it and hear as if "the voice of their own soul heard in the calm of thought." Beneath the distinctions, which although they seemed fundamental prove to be superficial, that separate the races, Mr. Tagore has stuck down to the principles that unify the race. His themes are of the sort that have gone to the making of literature in all ages, but no one has handled them recently with the immediacy and intensity of vision and feeling that are his. They are old, but in his hands have the freshness of dew upon young flowers. They are majestic and yet are set forth with an inimitable delicacy and tenderness. In the West they have been turned into abstractions and have been subjected to all the apparatus and feeling. It is all to the good that a literature that has found its way with such astonishing directness into the heart of a civilisation engrossed in its science, its commerce, and its machinery should be rapidly on the increase. Close upon "Gitanjali" came "The Gardener," close upon the latter came the charming and winsome "Crescent Moon" and now comes "Sadhana." Certain words in the preface to "Sadhana" are exceedingly illuminative.

"For Western scholars," says Mr. Tagore, "the religious scriptures of India seem to possess merely a retrospective and archaeological interest, but to us they are of living importance, and we cannot help exhibited in labelled cases - mummified specimens of human thought and aspiration, preserved for all time in the wrappings of erudition." Exactly, and so have our own scriptures. Then comes the secret of much of Mr. Tagore's genius and of the charm of his work. "The meaning of the experiences of great hearts can never be exhausted by any one system of logical interpretation. They have to be endlessly explained by the commentaries of individual lives, and they gain an added mystery in each new revelation. To me the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth."

8 December, 1913

## THE SCOTSMAN

p3c5(D)

### Section: CURRENT LITERATURE

THE CRESCENT MOON : By Rabindranath Tagore. With eight illustrations in colour. 4s. 6d. net. London : Macmillan & Co.

SADHANA : The Realisation of Life. By Rabindranath Tagore. 5s. net. London : Macmillan & Co.

It is but a short time ago that Mr. Rabindranath Tagore made his first appeal to a European audience with the prose translations from his own Bengali verse which he published in the volume entitled "Gitanjali". The worth of these remarkable poems won immediate recognition, and their author has had the high honour conferred upon him of the Nobel Prize for literature. This prevailing note in "Gitanjali" was that of a profound and imaginative mysticism. In the second volume of translations, "The Gardener", Mr. Tagore gave a selection from his love poems. Now in "The Crescent Moon" he presents English prose versions of some of his lyrics of child-life. These, it must be confessed, have scarcely the same poetic value as the poems contained in the two previous volumes; but they are at the same time tender, exquisite and beautiful lyrics, in which a fancy, sometimes grave, plays round the child's thoughts and imaginations. The best of them is the piece "When I bring you coloured toys, my child" which appeared in "Gitanjali", but some of the new ones are worthy to stand by its side. There is, for example, the pathetic lament, "The Recall", beginning:-

"The night was dark when she went away, and they slept.

"The night is dark now, and I call for her, 'Come back my darling; the world is asleep, and no one would know, if you came for a moment while the stars are gazing at stars'"

But the whole book is full of good things put in that wonderfully musical English of which Mr. Tagore, with a feeling for the language which is

marvellous in a member of another race, has caught the secret. The volume is illustrated with a number of delicate colour pictures executed by Indian artists. In "Sadhana", Mr. Tagore puts into book form a number of addresses on the Indian philosophical outlook upon life and the universe which he has delivered before American and English audiences. They consist of expositions of the teaching of the Upanishads and of Buddha, expressed in a style of great lucidity and simplicity, and illumined by many striking poetical analogies. Some of the most interesting passages are those in which the author contrasts Indian doctrine with Christian teaching. To Western students of philosophy and religion the book should appeal, both for its own sake as an expression of a gifted poet's creed, and as an enlightened interpretation of the Oriental spirit.

came to your door, and grasped your hand to ask his way Keep his trust, lead him straight, and bless him "

"I wish I could travel by the road that crosses baby's mind, and out beyond all bounds where reason makes kites of her laws and flies them and truth sets fact free from its fetters"

The careful reader will notice many touches interpreting life in Bengal; the singing as people travel, walking through the shadow of the Chanipa tree to the court where the prayers are said; the howl of the jackals in the island overgrown with weeds, women coming to fill their jars in a pond beneath the shaggy banyan tree, and so on

This beautiful edition contains eight coloured illustrations from drawings by native artists. Macmillan and Co. 4s. 6d. net.

10 December, 1913

### THE NORTHERN ECHO

p6c4(D)

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S CHILD POEMS

Mr. Tagore's translations of his Bengali child poems are as impressive as they are unique. By this we do not mean that the thought is always new to the English reader. Such a poem as "The Beginning" with its remarkable likeness to George MacDonald's well-known piece, provides one of several cases in which similarity of diction as well as of thought are obvious. But all these psalms of childhood show a penetrating knowledge and eastern beauty which are most impressive. The highest point is reached in such poems as "The Judge", "Benediction" and the "Child Angel". It is impossible to quote either of these at length but here are some thoughts culled from these and one or two other poems -

"I alone have a right to blame and punish for he only may chastise who loves".

On a baby -

"He has come into this land of an hundred cross roads. I know not how he chose you from the crowd,

10 December, 1913

### PUNCH

p494(V)

#### MR. PUNCH'S OWN INDIAN POET

It is well known that *Mr. Punch* desires to keep abreast of all such literary movements as many elevate humanity by purifying the more obvious emotions and throwing a veil of poetry over the expression of thought. It is plain that this object cannot be properly attained without the possession of at least one highly qualified Indian poet ready at all times to break into verse (or, as some might say, to drop into poetry) on every subject that may conceivably be treated through the medium of metre. Such an assistant *Mr. Punch* has at last secured. It is not necessary that this gentleman's name should be divulged. *Mr. Punch's* word is a sufficient guarantee both for the poet's existence and for his unimpeachable good faith in the discharge of his poetical duties. Moreover, it is not to be supposed that *Mr. Punch* would be willing to pay the substantial honorarium to which he has committed himself unless he had previously satisfied himself that his poet was the genuine article.

After much consideration *Mr. Punch* has decided not to publish his poet's effusions in the original. It

R 12, 1913.

## ooks.

## ROWN-UPS."

It is often so solemn and at the same time that it is so, and so familiar as Jane Austen as anyone. Some of us of nothing but a child's is, for example, of a child drawing close to his mother and off with him and tell him of of Topazier in the fairy a child who is planning to, clearly laden with folk, run the "seven seas and of of fairyland"; or of one having to go to school under a building when the rain who when he was the "Bangles, crystal bangles!" "Bangles, crystal bangles!" and I was without being later, the woman coming his going to bed. by Indian artists—are good on inimitable part of the art from anything else is a production.

HOWARD THOMAS.

round down Christ- mas books of the humorous sort which we have this season for the "grown-ups." Another, with the title "Childhood" is to be specially mentioned because it is in quite special favour. It consists of [? ] stories written, not translated, by Mr. Michael Wynn, and illustrated by Miss Evelyn Paul. The tales are told by the simplicity and tenderness of maternal remembrance, and that is one reason why they have caught on. The other reason lies in the pictures, which are fine in themselves and reproduced fairly. Oh, the "grown-ups" are well off at Christmas in this year of grace.

But there are books in the Christmas market for everybody of every age in years and of every pocket in wealth. The shelves of the bookshops are heavy with the offerings of Books Clubs in print, not quite so heavy, may be, as other Yuletide have come, but still heavy. We tell today in various articles of some of these books, and there are more to be had for the asking—and paying; on his way to the nearest bookshop and, as the Americans say, "Get busy!" If you tell

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## Oxford Historical and Literary New Volume in 1913.

## OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Fig. 16 Advertisement of *The Crescent Moon*  
The Daily Chronicle, 12 December, 1913, p6

is a characteristic of true Indian poetry that it should be as effective in a prose translation as in its own language. It is only necessary to add that *Mr. Punch's* corps of translators has all the best Rabindranath qualifications, and that their work may be depended upon to convey to English readers all the simple mysticism and the plaintive out-pourings which distinguish the votaries of the Indian muse.

In order to prove that he is not talking at random or attempting to mislead his readers, *Mr. Punch* ventures to append two specimens of his poet's work.

## I

## A WOMAN IN THE MOONLIGHT

The moon is shining as moons have sometimes shone through hours that would otherwise have been devoid of light. O pale moon, what art thou shining upon and what becomes of thy beams when they have completed their work of shining? Does the quiet pool absorb them? Nay, the pool sends them back with renewed brilliance. Does the buffalo in the pasture fill his mouth with them and use them as a cud to be chewed placidly? Not so, for he has grass, which for the buffalo is better and more palatable than moonbeams. Who then is this walking with silver feet through the sleeping village?

It is a woman, and to her the moonlight is as a home. She has knees and ankles and arms - think of it, O my heart. knees and ankles and arms. Silver bangles are on her wrists and her hair is dusky with the kisses of the south wind.

She approaches and her eyes gaze into the night. What does she see in the night? Does she see my love in the night while I myself am concealed behind the wall? O wall of my safe concealment, let me cling to thee while she passes.

O my fair one, thy veil is as an enchantment and the turn of thy shoulder breathes mystery.

The moon has faded, and thou, too, has vanished, but I will return and sing thy praises.

## II

## THE FLOWING OF THE RIVER

My beloved is poised upon the river-bank with a delicate poising. Waft your favours to her, ye breezes, and make her fair with all your gifts of beauty. If she

be not beautiful, how shall she be sung? But she is beautiful, with one foot dipped in the cool surface of the water.

When the soul is young it sings like a bird in the topmost branches of the tree. Sing, thou careless bird, and my soul shall sing too. But my soul can do more than sing. My soul can fly, bearing a message. My soul can skim along the river and can kiss the moist toes of her dipped foot.

Lo, she raises her foot, for she has felt the kiss, though it was light as the rustle of the tamarisk. Canst thou kiss like that, O hard-beaked bird?

The foregoing specimens are, in *Mr. Punch's* opinion, sufficient for his purpose. Not only will they be appreciated, he feels sure, by all readers who have refused to close their minds to the appeal of a poetry which is at once sensuous and refined and passionate and restrained and which, without sacrificing sound to sense, tends to raise those who read it far above the harassing conventions of a life lived in these islands, they will also, he has no hesitation in saying, bring conviction to the soul of the most hardened and contemptuous cynic.

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11 December, 1913

THE NEW AGE

p176(W)

## Section: READERS AND WRITERS

The case of the Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature comes conveniently to mind. At its meeting ten days ago, four new members of the maximum mortal forty were admitted and the de Polignac prize of £100 was awarded to Mr. James Stephens for his "Crock of Gold". Now does anybody believe that if we had not condemned Mr. Stephens the Academic Committee would have applauded him? For he is not alone in receiving consolation for our stripes. Mr. Masfield and Mr. Tagore have both been given awards in money or praise and both of them have suffered at our hands. The coincidence between our criticism and their awards is too improbable to be mere chance. My mathematics simply will not hear of it. The conclusion is that the Academic Committee select out

worst and make them their best, thus, by contrariety, acknowledging what they would most strenuously deny. Mr. W. B. Yeats, who presented the cheque with speech to Mr. Stephens, was happier in the first than in the second. The "Crock of Gold", he said, was "wise and beautiful, weighty with new morals, lofty and airy with philosophy" - which might pass with plenty of champagne; but when he went on to claim Mr. Stephens as a Dublin product the self-contradiction should have brought a full house down. "Mr. Stephens had been educated by the literary discussions, by the books; and by the critical standards he had met in Dublin". In Dublin, you understand - where no English books and no English critical standards ever penetrate! But I shall have something to say about Dublin on another occasion. The foregoing shall be sacred to Mr. Stephens.

R.H.C.

12 December, 1913

### THE DAILY CHRONICLE

p6c3-5(D)

### THE CHRISTMAS GIFT-BOOKS

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S CHILD POEMS FOR "GROWN-UPS"

A BOOK of poems about little folk, which deserves a place with Stevenson's "Child's Garden" and Walter de la Mare's "Songs of Childhood," has been published for this Christmas. It is:

**THE CRESCENT MOON**, by Rabindranath Tagore, translated from the Bengali by the author, with eight illustrations in colour. London, Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net.

These seasonable, charming, and welcome child poems have the same quality that makes for excellence in Tagore's "Gardener." That is to say, they take common things from common life - little things, often trifling things - and transmute them, not by the decorations of rhetoric, but by the supreme poetic power of relating the part to the whole, of suggesting the whole by the part, of creating intensely sig-

nificant symbols making men of dolls, gods of men, children of gods. This book might have sprung from the words of a child recorded in one of them.

What nice stories, mother, you can tell us!

Why can't father write like that, I wonder?

Did he never hear from his own mother stories  
of giants and fairies and princesses?

Has he forgotten them all?

He has not forgotten them all. But it is not his purpose in this book to report them. Here, in fact, he is not often directly concerned with his own childhood but with that of children whom he has watched since he knew that he was to die. Whatever he says of them is tinged with a depth of tenderness which can be surmised from a most beautiful poem called "The First Jasmines":

Ah, these jasmines, these white jasmines!

I seem to remember the first day when I filled  
my hands with these jasmines, these white jasmines.

I have loved the sunlight, the sky and the green  
earth.

I have heard the liquid murmur of the river  
through the darkness of midnight.

Autumn sunsets have come to me at the bend of  
a road in the lonely waste, like a bride raising her  
veil to accept her lover.

Yet my memory is still sweet with the first white  
jasmines that I held in my hand when I was a child.

It is however, no mawkish or condescending tenderness as of certain adult poetic adorers of babies. It is often as solemn and lofty as Shelley, at the same time that it is as plain as Blake, and as familiar as Jane Taylor, and as food as anyone. Some of the poems are made of nothing but a child's words - the words, for example, of a child on a cloudy day drawing close to his mother asking her to leave off work and tell him "where the desert of Tepantar in the fairy tale is." Or of a child who is planning to take a boat "evidently laden with jute," and send it across the "seven seas and the thirteen rivers of fairyland"; or of one who thinks the flowers go to school underground and have holidays when the rains come; or of one who wishes he were the hawket crying "Bangles, crystal bangles"; all day; or the gardener digging away and getting dirty and wet

without being interfered with, or the watchman swinging his lantern and never going to bed.

The pictures - by Indian artists - are good enough to form an inseparable part of the book, which apart from anything else is a masterpiece of translation.

EDWARD THOMAS

12 December, 1913

**DARTFORD CHRONICLE AND DISTRICT TIMES**

p10cl(D)

### AN INDIAN POET'S FANCIES

Here are a few quotations from "the Crescent Moon", by Rabindranath Tagore, the famous Hindu poet (Macmillan):

"Where have I come from, where did you pick me up?" the baby asked its mother

She answered, half-crying, half-laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast: "You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling

"In all my hopes and my loves, in my life, in the life of my mother you have lived

"When in girlhood my heart was opening its petals, you hovered as a fragrance about it

"Your tender softness bloomed in my youthful limbs, like a glow in the sky before the sunrise

"Heaven's first darling, twin-born with the morning light, you have floated down the stream of the world's life, and at last you have stranded on my heart"

\* \* \*

"Mother, I really think the flowers go to school underground.

They do their lessons with doors shut, and if they want to come out to play before it is time, their master makes them stand in a corner.

When the rains come they have their holidays

\* \* \*

Mother, I do want to leave off my lessons now  
I have been at my books all the morning.

You say it is only twelve o'clock. Suppose it isn't any later, can't you ever think it is afternoon when it is only twelve o'clock?

If twelve o'clock can come in the night, why can't the night come when it is twelve o'clock?

\* \* \*

I saw the postman bringing letters in his bag for almost everybody in the town

Only, father's letters he keeps to read himself. I am sure the postman is a wicked man

When I finish my writing, do you think I shall be so foolish as father and drop it into the horrid postman's bag?

I shall bring it to you myself without waiting, and letter by letter help you to read my writing

I know the postman does not like to give you the really nice letters

—

13 December, 1913

**THE NATION**

p499(W)

### REVIEWS

#### THE CIRCLE AND THE CENTRE

**"Sadhana: The Realization of Life" By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan. 5s. net.)**

**"The Crescent Moon" Child Poems. By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Translated from the original Bengali by the Author. (Macmillan. 5s. 6d. net.)**

The common way of misunderstanding the mystic and the so-called "revival" of mysticism which we are now witnessing has not seriously affected it - is to regard him as a being set apart from the common life: living in contact with the eternal only because he has managed to escape from, or ignore, the flux. Those who admire him speak of his detachment from the world, the solitary character of his communion with reality. Often they insist, with a special delight and a complete wrong-headedness, on the individual

nature of his experience, its total independence of tradition, as if the real merit of the tree consisted in having no roots. Those who dislike him make accusations of "other worldliness" and spiritual egoism; denying that experience so subjective can possess any value for the race.

But when we approach these specially gifted spirits, and accept with sympathy and humility that which they say, we find the truth, as they see it, to be just the opposite to this. They are not more withdrawn from life than other men, but more deeply immersed in it. The reality of which they tell us is not remote—it is our own reality, the uninterrupted music of our own soul's life, which they are trying to interpret to us as well as they can. They have plunged down to the centre about which our daily life, in all its manifestations, revolves; and this adventure of theirs is ours also, they make the pilgrimage to the Holy City in our name, all that they do has a corporate significance. So, too, they have as a rule that sense of nationality and tradition which is seldom absent from true human greatness. They are rooted in history, in the stream of becoming—it is from the midst of the temporal order, and making glad use of the traditions it has developed, that they undertake their ascents to the higher levels of consciousness. Their mission is not to destroy, but to fulfil with ever deeper meanings the universe of normal men.

We may see all this in the past history of mysticism, if we look at it with "innocence of eye": in such diverse types of spiritual genius as St. Paul, Ruysbroeck, William Blake, amongst Christians, Jalalu'ddin and Kabir in the East. But since the present is always more actual to us than that which we call "past", perhaps we may see it more easily in the rich and various artistic achievements of the one great mystical poet of our own day. The two books by Rabindranath Tagore which are here under consideration—the prose essays on the realization of life, the poems in which that realisation, as found in the crescent life of little children, is given delicate and beautiful form—show that outward sweep from centre to periphery in which the mystic colours with its central vision and certitude, his outflowing love, all those aspects of life in and through which reality is mediated to the majority of men. That intensely sacramental handling of the stuff of existence, finding and feeling the infinite under all the accidents of

sense, which is taught us as out of the heart of experience, the gathering-point of understanding and love, in the essays, is quietly exhibited, with the light touch of the great artists, in the poems.

"Sadhana" is not philosophic treatise; it is a personal statement, which makes free, but not exclusive use of the philosophic formulae of Indian religion, in the course of expounding its author's vision of life. Its temper is at once individual, national, yet also universal; accepting all the natural links of our closely-woven humanity, not as fetters, but as supports to the soul.

"The writer," says Mr. Tagore, "has been brought up in a family where texts of the Upanishads are used in daily worship; and he has had before him the example of his father, who lived his long life in the closest communion with God, while not neglecting his duty to the world, or allowing his keen interest in all human affairs to suffer any abatement."

To me the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them, both in my own life and in my preaching, as being instinct with individual meaning for me, as for others, and awaiting for their confirmation my own special testimony which must have its value because of its individuality."

Observe here the instinctive mystic appeal to experience as verifying formulae, as against the dogmatic appeal to formulae as verifying experience. Realization, actualization, is the inspiring principle from first to last; and this realization, this complete consciousness, is claimed, not only as an individual but as a national aim; not only as the prize of meditation, but as the inspiring soul of all fruitful action too:

"The fundamental unity of creation was not simply a philosophic speculation for India; it was her life-object to realize this great harmony in feeling and in action. India intuitively felt that the essential fact of this world has a vital meaning for us."

"In feeling *and* in action." It is the crown of mystic endeavour when this syntheses is achieved; when a man's love, faith, and work are as closely

united as his body, soul, and spirit; when, as St. Augustine has it, "My life shall be a real life, being wholly full of Thee." The most beautiful and most significant of all the chapters in "Sadhana" is that which describes this "Realization in Action"; this unification of the inner and the outer life, of effort and of fruition, in one whole, of which the dominant expression shall be, not "secluded communion," but joyous, eager work, a glad self-dedicated striving, a partnership with God:

"Those who have fully realized the soul, have never talked in mournful accents of the sorrowfulness of life, or of the bondage of action .. they desire in their joy to express themselves strenuously in their life and in their work."

These know that man's soul is a dynamic thing: that motion, rhythm, is the very essence of the beauty of that world-poem in which they are placed, and that it expresses the joy and thought of God. Hence they desire, not to contemplate, but to march with that music, and contribute as well as they can to the self-realization of the Whole; for "the universal is ever seeking its consummation in the unique" The essence of the problem of Self is the problem of the relation of the word and the poem, the note and the melody; the paradox of the individual achieving true personality only by giving itself to the universal, of Paul's "Dying to live," self-loss as the only self-finding, that union in separateness which is the deepest mystery of love:

"A love must have two wills nor the realization of his love, because the consummation of love is in harmony, the harmony between freedom and freedom. So God's love from which our self has taken form, has made it separate from God; and it is God's love which again establishes a reconciliation and unites God with our self through the separation "

The double rhythm of love and renunciation, in fact, is the fundamental form taken by the Creative Energy, in that "joyous play" of which the outward expression is our universe; and man, if he finds his place, must conform to its laws. He must learn to distinguish between realization and possession - the secret of Franciscan poverty. Infinitizing his life, set upon the only path that is truly satisfying because truly end-

less, the problem of pain and evil will be transfigured for him. Love and beauty will acquire totally new meanings, as he grows into awareness of his true nature and becomes fully conscious under the dual modes of activity and rest, self-fulfilment and self-surrender, of that union with Supreme Reality, which "has been accomplished in timeless time." The human soul, ever moving like a river, at one end has already attained that Ocean which is her fulfilment, at the other is ever attaining it. It is her peculiar character that she participates at once in the worlds of Being and of Becoming; lives, to adopt the phrase of Harnack, "Eternal Life in the midst of Time."

Thus her life at one end "is eternal rest and completion at the other it is incessant movement and change. When she knows both ends as inseparably connected, then she knows the world as her own household, by the right of knowing the master of the world as her own lord "

What, then, is the poet's vision of life, as he looks from this yet active centre of his being? "The Gardener" and "The Crescent Moon" can tell us something of that, in their direct and simple beauty, their hold upon real things, the pure quality of their joy, their clear avoidance of the vice of mysticality.

In "The Gardener" English readers have already had an opportunity of learning to see love and death through the mystic's eyes; in the handful of poems which make up "The Crescent Moon" they can share a vision of childhood which is only paralleled in our literature by the work of William Blake. Here is the same simplicity and profundity, that same sense of the child's boundless importance, the reality of the universe in which it lives. None who come in solemn search of "spiritual meanings" will discover the secret of these poems; for here, the thing is the meaning, the illuminated texture of existence reveals, does not veil, reality.

"Where have I come from, where did you pick me up? the baby asked its mother

"She answered, half-crying, half-laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast:

"You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling.

"You were in the dolls of my childhood's games,

and when with clay I made the image of my God  
every morning, I made and unmade you then . .

"As I gaze on your face, mystery overwhelms me;  
you, who belong to all, have become mine!"

"As I gaze on your face mystery overwhelms me." The child is so close to the Infinite that the joyous play of the Universe, the impact to beauty, novelty, and wonder, is more clearly felt in his little life than in the tangled lives of men; who have put on the fetters and blinkers of ignorance and desire. The boy, like the poet, sees things in their native purity; he knows that the bit of broken twig which he plays with is as radiant and precious as our silver and gold. He lives in a poet's world, where the stars talk and the sky stoops down to amuse him, and all nature comes to his window with trays of bright toys - a fairy universe of limitless possibilities. His relation with that world is, in little, the untarnished human relation, and can interpret to us something of the meaning of our own mysterious contacts with things: for the flame of separation has not yet fenced him off from communing with the wind and the flowers, the unbroken continuity which we must strive to realize through long efforts and purifications exist in its perfection in him. This is the general attitude illustrated from many angles in "The Crescent Moon, with the imaginative resource, the delicate playfulness, the profound sense of wonder and mystery, proper to the great poets. From the airy phantasy of "Fairylane" and "The Champa Flower" to the almost unbearable beauty and sorrow of "The End," the whole span of human emotion is brought into play; and made to centre about the august figure of childhood, in which another Teacher found our surest contact with Reality.

"They clamour and fight, they doubt and despair, they know no end to their wranglings

Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my child, unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence . .

Let them see your face, my child, and thus know the meaning of all things let them love you, and thus love each other

Come and take your seat in the bosom of the limitless, my child. At sunrise open and raise your heart like a blossoming flower, and at sunset bend your head, and in silence complete the worship of the day."

13 December, 1913

**THE NEW STATESMAN**

p309(W)

#### Section: CURRENT LITERATURE

I hear that the award of the Nobel Prize to Mr Rabindranath Tagore has sent up his sales enormously, both in Europe and America. Unless, which I doubt, one of the judges possessed a knowledge of Oriental tongues, the award must have been rather a matter of faith, for the only thing of Mr. Tagore's the judges can have had before them in a European tongue was the *Gitanjali*. If Mr. Tagore's status in India is what it is alleged to be, the award was perfectly justified; but I hope the judge like the recently-published English version of *The Crescent Moon* better than I do. Those myriads of Anglo-Saxon sheep who, because of the Nobel award, are rushing to buy Mr. Tagore's volumes are buying something which, whatever it may be in the original, is in English rather thin and very monotonous. The unjustified boom we have always with us.

Solomon Eagle

14 December, 1913<sup>2</sup>

**THE OBSERVER**

p104(S)

#### PILGRIMS TO A POET

#### INDIANS AND MR. TAGORE'S NEW HONOUR

(From Our Own Correspondent)

BOMBAY, Nov. 29

The Biblical maxim: "A man is not without honour save in his own country" cannot be applied to

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the famous Bengali poet, who has just been awarded the Nobel prize for literature. His countrymen in the East are as enthusiastic as his admirers in the West in doing honour to him and congratulating him upon the way in which his work has been recognised.

Mr. Tagore's residence, Santi Niketan, ("the Home of Peace"), at Bolepore, has been the Mecca this week of a wonderful pilgrimage of poets and dreamers to pay tribute to the mystic. On Sunday, 600 of his countrymen from Calcutta visited Mr. Tagore and presented him with an address. "Among the passengers," wrote the 'Statesman's' correspondent, "were judges, barristers, doctors, scientists and other men of light and leading."

On arrival the deputation was met by students from the poet's school, dressed in yellow garments. The road from the station to the Home of Peace - a distance of more than a mile - was beautifully decorated with mango and lotus leaves and festoons of flowers. The way was strewn with cowries (shells), coins, garlands of flowers and paddy grain.

At the Santi Niketan, shaded by mango trees, was a high altar with a professional chair. The scene was typically Hindoo, and the blowing of conch shells, the smell of burning incense, the mango groves, the picturesque robes, and the distant temple all added to the poetry of it.

Mr. Tagore, clothed in silk dhooti and chudder, sat on the vedi which was covered with lotus leaves. Mr. Holland, Principal of the C.M.S. College, said that the award of the Nobel prize to the poet had repudiated the lines of Mr. Rudyard Kipling:

"East is East and West is West,  
The twain shall never meet."

After the poet had been presented with a magnificent painting of the sun he rose to reply. "As he stood," says the 'Statesman,' "we saw a truly Aryan sage. The neatly brushed flowing hair, the chiselled features, the erect handsome figure and the beautiful, meditative eyes all combined to present a perfect picture of the best type of Aryan philosopher."

Mr. Tagore's voice is sweet and musical. He had never, he said, longed for fame. His claim was to the heart.

17 December, 1913

## THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

p220(V)

### THE EASTERN STANDPOINT\*

These two books appear together. The one is a book of lectures or essays on religious philosophy, the other is a book of children's poems, or perhaps better, poems about children. It is not necessary to choose between them. Like two sisters with rival charms, they enter the ballroom together, and there is a fluttering of hearts among the men and a straying of eyes from one to the other; but you can get both on your programme if you have luck. If it were necessary, however, to choose between them, if they were jealous sisters, at daggers drawn, neither of which would grant the boon of a dance to a partner of the other, I should have no difficulty in choosing.

These lectures are excellent. One may envy the students at Tagore's school in Bolpur, to whom (and afterwards at Harvard) they were delivered. They discuss the eternal problems of the self, the universe, Evil, Freedom, Realisation, and the like. They do not solve the problems; it may even be said that they throw no new light on them; but they place them in a setting of such spaciousness, calmness, and luminousness that one does not want the problems solved. In a sense, these essays are above criticism; that is to say, they will be criticised only by the man who is hidebound in an antagonistic, impervious thought-system. From the point of view which the author takes, they may be almost said to speak the last word. To the mystic and the monist they will be strangely satisfying. They display to the sympathetic reader a spiritual imagination at a very high point of culture, not going through the problems as much as flowing round them with waves of pure, peaceful light. The problems remain, and may still be awkward knots for the intellect to unravel, but here we see the soul of a man embracing them, transcending them. The chapters are crowded with aphoristic sentences which stick in the mind. For example :

\*"Sadhana" and "The Crescent Moon" By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan 5s and 4s 6d net)

To understand anything, is to find in it something which is our own, and it is the discovery of ourselves outside us which makes us glad.

Good is that which is desirable for our greater self

To live the life of goodness is to live the life of all

Pain is the vestal virgin consecrated to the service of the immortal perfection, and when she takes her true place before the altar of the infinite, she casts off her dark veil and bares her face to the beholder as a revelation of supreme joy.

It is joy that creates the separation, in order to realise through obstacles the union.

Love must be one and two at the same time  
Beauty is love's wooing of our heart

A thing is only completely our own when it is a thing of joy to us

We get, in these pages, the Eastern standpoint in viewing life and the universe; we get, also, numerous texts from the Eastern scriptures; and we know that divine revelation is not limited to our own religion. There is, as in teaching of all masters, a wealth of parable, of apt illustration, and passages of amazing beauty; the closing paragraphs of the book, about the Ferryman, are a treasure of unalloyed gold.

And yet, if I had to choose, I would let these essays go and take "The Crescent Moon" with both hands. It is sheer genius and joy. There is nothing quite like it in any literature I know of. For simplicity and loveliness it is unmatched. It is a voice from that happy kingdom of heaven into which those enter who 'become as a little child'. The Eastern child is interpreted here for us; he is different from the Western child, gives one the impression of being frailer, more reflective, somewhat exotic perhaps, but he is full of whimsy and pretty petulance, and imaginative play, and delicious wisdom. Some of the poems are about children -

The sweet, soft, freshness that blooms on baby's limbs - does anybody know where it was hidden so long? Yes, when the mother was a young girl, it lay pervading her heart in tender and silent mystery of love - the sweet soft, freshness that has bloomed on baby's limbs.

Some are expressions of the child's own love and fancy -

Mother, the folk who live in the waves call out to me - "We sing from morning till night; on and on we travel and know not where we pass"

I ask, "But how am I to join you?"

They tell me, "Come to the edge of the shore and stand with your eyes tight shut, and you will be carried out upon the waves."

I say, "My mother always wants me at home in the evening - how can I leave her and go?"

Then they smile, dance and pass by.

But I know a better game than that.

I will be the waves, and you will be a strange shore.

I shall call on, and on, and on, and break upon your lap with laughter And no one in the world will know where we both are.

Yes, if Rabindranath Tagore could coin all the delight and gratitude that he has quickened in our hearts the Nobel Prize would seem a very paltry thing.

E. W. LEWIS

19 December, 1913

THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

p3c1(DE)

### HOW THE GOOD NEWS REACHED THE SANTINIKETAN

A little after four boys spread over the great treeless plain which surrounds the santiniketan, dividing into four games of football and one of cricket. In November the sun sinks very fast; it is still hot at four, yet cold and dark long before half-past five. I joined the cricketers, small boys who played really very well. My part in their game was that of instructor; I showed them how to bowl off-breaks. Darkness fell quickly. After the cricket came what is called the "entertainment period." The students take it for granted that the sahibs who visit them, a small company, are entertaining persons, and will occupy this hour. "Mr. A - always addresses us, and Mr. P - does; so you will." I did. It was glorious moonlight, and they sat on their strips of matting, on the plain behind the Asram

(Asylum). They got ten minutes of Bengali rather more of English. After I had "entertained" them, boys, masters, and myself wandered about, and I entertain them still more with my Bengali. They were dreadfully courteous and complimentary about it, and insisted that I made no mistakes; but I know that a sahib's Bengali, if not hopelessly inaccurate, is generally very stilted.

About half-past seven I went to my room. Almost immediately there was a great hubbub; the masters came running up. "We have great news," they cried, waving a sheaf of telegrams. "Mr. Tagore has won the Nobel prize." The poet himself entered just then; I went to him and said, "Rabi Babu, you must let me have the honour of being the first Englishman to congratulate you." We shook hands. I felt like a school-boy with joy. "Earth has nothing more for you now Rabi Babu. You must commit suicide this very night. Only, first of all let us settle what you are to do in your next incarnation." But a great noise was rising outside; the boys were going mad. They didn't know what the Nobel prize was, but they understood that their adored gurudev had just done something wonderful, as indeed, he was always doing. "They are wanting a holiday," said the masters. "At least a year's holiday?" I said. "You cannot, for shame, give them a day less." A roar of singing rose. The boys had formed ranks and were marching to their school-song, "Amader Santiniketan" ("Our Home of Peace"). The masters joined them. The procession went past when they saw that we were talking inside the room; but, at the second time of going round the place, they stopped at the door. I went to it; they were drunk with hero-worship, a swaying mob. "You'll have to come," I called, and the poet came. Then, in a frenzy of worship, all - boys, masters, servants - bent down, one after the other, and touched his feet. That saint of a man stood deprecatingly, with his hands to his face, palms together, begging pardon ("jorhat kore," they call it in Bengali). I could almost have joined with them, but I am an Englishman, with a stern contempt for those fools who pretend they are Orientals; this was a ceremony in which I could have no share, though reverencing and loving the man exceedingly. At last I said. "They are prepared to do this till further orders, Rabi Babu." "Yes," he said. "We'll go in." So we went in, and the boys dispersed and made a huge bonfire; they shouted till far into the night. It was now about eight o'clock.

Rabi Babu and I talked till nearly midnight, then walked into the moonlight.

Next day I was up before dawn and saw the sun rise over the edge of the plain. I ran across some small boys gathering flowers. They told me they were making a garland.

CONRAD OF ELSASS

20 December, 1913

**THE INQUIRER**

p805(W)

### THE CHILD ANGEL

Where the angels who sang the first Christmas hymn the spirits of little children, we wonder, finding in heaven the unending service of joy which was never fulfilled on earth. Perhaps it is only a quaint fancy, and yet it is one which seems to fit in with all our thoughts of the advent of the holy Child, who is never folded so closely to our hearts as when we find a large place in our religion for simple joys and the innocent laughter of children. It is the Christ-child who should hallow with his presence all our festivities, bringing the brightness of new hope to old and weary eyes, making us lovers once again of all things that are simple and divinely fair, robbing even the gifts which we make to one another in token of our gladness of all false pomp and ostentation, for they must be emblems of the love which we would give to one another and to him.

We have come across one gift lately, sweet and precious enough for these holy uses. We hope that many happy mothers and children will receive it this Christmas time. It is the volume of poems by RABINDRANATH TAGORE, called "The Crescent Moon" (London. Macmillan & Co., 4s. 6d, net). Its music is like the blended voices of mother and child. Now the child launches the bark of his merry fancy on a boundless sea. Now the mother breaks in with passionate yearning for the child at her side or the child in her heart.

"I stopped for a moment," the poet sings, "in my lonely way under the starlight, and saw spread

before me the darkened earth surrounding with her arms countless homes furnished with cradles and beds, mothers' hearts and evening lamps, and young lives glad with a gladness that knows nothing of its value for the world "

And sometimes the poet sings of the mission of children in a world of strife, seeing in them heavenly peace-makers, unconscious pleaders for simplicity and love. The "Child Angel" is such a poem, and never has the message "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" been interpreted with purer reverence or deeper joy.

"They clamour and fight, they doubt and despair, they know no end to their wranglings

"Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my child, unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence

"They are cruel in their greed and their envy, their words are like hidden knives thirsting for blood

"Go and stand amidst their scowling hearts, my child, and let your gentle eyes fall upon them like the forgiving peace of the evening over the strife of the day

"Let them see your face, my child, and thus know the meaning of all things, let them love you and thus love each other "

22 December, 1913

**THE GLOBE**

p8c3-4(DE)

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE INDIAN POET

#### "SADHANA"\*

Rabindranath Tagore is a great, perhaps a very great, poet, and upon none could the Nobel Prize have more fittingly been bestowed. But poetry is one thing, and philosophy another, and in the "Sadhana" we do not find very material contribution to the wisdom of mankind. As a revelation of

the Indian attitude towards the problem of God, Life, and the Universe it is extremely interesting, and all is expressed with that delicate perfection which Mr. Tagore has taught us to expect from him. But in pure philosophy he has not much to tell the West that the West does not already know, while his ethic is set out with all necessary force and completeness in the Christian Gospels. But he is very helpful in removing Western misconceptions of Oriental thought.

Some modern philosophers of Europe, who are directly or indirectly indebted to the Upanishads, far from realising their debt, maintain that the Brahma of India is a mere abstraction, a negation of all that is in the World. In a word, that the Infinite Being is to be found nowhere except in metaphysics. It may be that such a doctrine has been, and still is, prevalent with a section of our countrymen. But this is certainly not in accord with the pervading spirit of the Indian mind. Instead, it is the practice of realising and affirming the presence of the infinite in all things which has been its constant inspiration.

#### ANCIENT SPIRIT OF INDIA

Mr. Tagore was brought up in a family where texts from Upanishads are used in daily worship, so that in his book we get the thought of a man who has all his life been permeated with the ancient spirit of India, and his work has therefore a special value for the Western reader who desires to understand the spirit aright. The following passage is an overstatement similar to those to which our own religious enthusiasts have accustomed us, but it is certainly only an exaggeration of the truth, not a real departure from it.

The fundamental unity of creation was not simply a philosophical speculation for India; it was her life-object to realise this great harmony in feeling and in action. With meditation and service, with a regulation of her life, she cultivated her consciousness her life-object to realise this great harmony in feeling and in action. With meditation and service, with a regulation of her life, she cultivated her consciousness in such a way that everything had a spiritual meaning to her. The earth, water and light, fruits and flowers, to her were not merely physical phenomena to be turned

\* "Sadhana, the Realisation of Life", by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan and Co., 5s. net)

to use and then left aside. They were necessary to her in the attainment of her ideal of perfection, as every note is necessary to the completeness of the symphony. India intuitively felt that the essential fact of this world has a vital meaning for us; we have to be fully alive to it and establish a conscious relation with it, not merely impelled by scientific curiosity or greed of material advantage, but realising it in the spirit of sympathy, with a large feeling of joy and peace.

### EAST AND WEST

It should be said in justice to Mr. Tagore that in this book he is neither defending his own position nor attacking that of others; he is occupied in expounding a particular form of religious thought, and he is satisfied when he has clearly stated it. When he has done that he leaves it to make its own way by virtue of its inherent truth. But the desire to be one with God is common to all the higher religions, and in the belief that in the soul of the man who has attained to it, so far as attainment is possible here, is to be found the most perfect revelation of God, is no novelty to Western thought.

His admission that in the will of man is to be found the only anomaly permitted by God in His universe, was long ago perceived by Western thinkers to be the only possible solution of the mystery of evil. That man must be free to fall in order to be free to stand is a familiar thought to us Occidental, and is indeed necessary to any reply to Man Friday's searching question, "Master, why God not kill the Devil?" But Mr. Tagore has apparently not perceived its inconsistency with the Indian conception of the unity of Man with nature, upon which he insists so strongly in the quotation we have given above.

### ZENO'S SOPHISM

In another passage Mr. Tagore says:- "All statistics consist of our attempts to represent statically what is in motion; and in the process things assume a weight in our mind which they have not in reality". Admitted, but did not Zeno in the Sophism of the Arrow make precisely the same discovery considerably more than two thousand years ago? That

the arrow never is at any point of its flight, but is always just about to enter or to emerge from it, is a proposition to which the human mind has never yet found any answer. But what the Eleatic philosopher intended to teach by his sophism was that we cannot conceive motion, but only a series of points of rest, though our power infinitely to subdivide time teaches us that such rests are non-existent.

If Mr. Tagore thinks it worthwhile to re-state the conclusion which Zeno's Sophism has made unassailable for such a very long time, we have, of course, no quarrel with him for doing so. But the re-statement is not to be accepted as a revelation, and still less does it involve the corollary that the picture given us by Science is essentially untrue. That picture is defective because otherwise it would be unintelligible, but it is true so far as it goes, and the aim of Science being to assert ever wider generalisations, it approaches nearer to perfect truth with every fresh generation.

Mr. Tagore will not admit that the Nirvana of his countrymen implies the extinction of self, but only of selfishness.

If this individuality be demolished, even though no material be lost, not an atom destroyed, the creative joy which was crystallised therein is gone. We are absolutely bankrupt if we are deprived of this speciality, this individuality, which is the only thing we can call our own, and which, if lost, is also a loss to the whole world. It is most valuable because it is not universal. And therefore only through it can we gain the universe more truly than if we were lying within its breast unconscious of our distinctiveness. The universal is ever seeking its consummation in the unique. And the desire we have to keep our uniqueness intact is really the desire of the universe acting in us. It is our joy of the infinite in us that gives us our joy in ourselves.

That is finely said, and we are very far from disputing it. But Mr. Tagore might very well be challenged to say how much of this individuality is left when Nirvana, "the symbol of the extinction of the lamp" is attained or to reconcile the statements in the passage we have quoted with the doctrine of Nirvana as actually taught. If, on the other hand, Nirvana is to be whittled down until it becomes no

more than a union of the will of Man, still remaining free, with the will of God it is only the doctrine which the Catholic Church has never ceased to preach.

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22 December, 1913

**PALL MALL GAZETTE**

p5c3(DE)

**Section: BOOKS OF REFERENCE**

The columnist pointed out that the Bengali poet, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore is lacking to the new edition of "Who's Who?" While the two namesakes of his are included who happen to have titles but are for the moment unimportant by comparison.

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24 December, 1913

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p16c2(D)

**SADHANA : THE REALISATION OF LIFE**

(Macmillan 5s net)

For some little while past a critical company, small but select, have been alive to the literary quality of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, and now that he has been brought into the limelight by a recent distinguished honour it will no doubt become the fashion to inquire what he stands for, and what is the "lone inwardness" of his curious and rather elusive poetry. To all such inquirers the present volume may be confidently recommended, since it contains, in little and with a commendable freedom from decoration, the essence of Mr. Tagore's message to the Western world. The English public, he surmised, regards the Indian religion as some faded hieratic document, far removed from the eager interests of modern life. But to the truly religious Indian the gospel of the Upanishads is a living thing; indeed, it might be described as the one vital force in the midst of a moribund civilisation. The present volume, based upon Mr. Tagore's lectures to his na-

tive students, expounds the essence of that religion in terms intelligible to the Western mind. Nothing could be clearer, more sensible, or more generally illuminative.

Most civilisations, as our author points out, have been fostered between walls, but the ancient Indian civilisation began in wide forests, in constant communication with Nature. There has consequently been less tendency in India than in other countries to erect barriers between man and his surroundings, and much more effort to realise life upon a grand scale. In the Indian tradition the simple life of the forest hermitage is forever stretching out its hands towards infinity, and Nature is regarded as the road which leads man to his destination. There are no dividing lines, moreover, between the different manifestations of natural life; creation itself is a presiding unity. Man's duty is to keep in touch with Nature, even to make himself one with its beneficent operations. In this way the old civilisation of India did not aim at power or acquisition; it concentrated itself upon the isolation of the contemplative life, and upon the treasures that lie hidden within the mysteries of reality. Selfishness must be cast aside, the body and soul must establish a mutual harmony; the individual must be united in the life of the Universe. Evil, again, is continually undergoing correction by the totality of life; it is perpetually in a state of flux, and so may always be eluded. For individuality is greater than evil, since it holds within itself the power of overcoming evil. At the same time, individuality must be merged in the godhead of the infinite. So long as man sets his individuality in the forefront of his activity he remains in a state of ignorance. He is, in fact, in bondage - the bondage of his own selfishness. He can only realise his true freedom when he merges his will in the eternal will of God. His daily worship is directed, not to acquiring God as a personal possession, but to surrendering himself to the Deity, and so extending the general consciousness of God's omnipotence in virtue and in love.

Such are the main outlines of this very suggestive monograph. A study of the noble code here laid down should do much to explain Mr. Tagore's philosophy, and to bridge the gulf of misunderstanding which still separates East from West.

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24 December, 1913

**TRUTH**

p1502-1503(W)

## NOTES FROM PARIS

### THE PRINCE AND THE POET

**PRINCE WILLIAM OF SWEDEN**, it may be remembered, took his young wife, from whom he is now divorced, on a tour in Asia. It embraced the one mapped out for the German Crown Prince and Princess, but not extended by them beyond Ceylon. This phase of his short married life, so brilliant to all appearance, is the subject of a book now published in Swedish and German. It has the merit of freshness, though the peregrinations he undertook are now hackneyed. His advantage over ordinary globe trotters lies in the help he met with everywhere as a royal personage married to a wealthy Russian Grand Duchess many times over connected with the Court of England. Though his family is but one hundred years old, one may notice in him that minutiae for which Royalties of German descent are remarkable - his mother and grandmother were Germans, and his great grandmother demi-Bavarian. He can take stock, for instance, of all the objects in an elaborately furnished room without attempting to draw any generalisations. Otherwise his vision is not very keen.

Of course, with his name, title and connection, all the officials he met with, Russian, British and French, were his humble and obedient servants. Without instructions from their respective governments, consuls and civil servants in Asia would have afforded him every facility to satisfy his curiosity as a tourist and escape the effects of trying climates. His indiscreet pen will make them repent their kindness, and will moderate in future those transports with which they are seized when strangers of his high rank turn up.

Prince William's visit to Calcutta, Swedes have said, brought about the award of the Nobel prize to Rabindranath Tagore. This Bengalee poet, in the opinion of French and other orientalist scholars, is hardly a typical Oriental, but rather an Anglo-Indian hybrid - at any rate as a poet.

Quite by chance the Prince made the acquaintance at Calcutta of a Swede, who told him that he ought to see a "lion" too frequently overlooked by tourists, the imperial museum of Indian art. Still more worthy of the intelligent sightseer was the Technical School of Indian Art, adjoining the museum, and more than all the house nearly next door of Rabindranath Tagore. The Swede spoke enthusiastically of his technical school, which was under Tagore's own management. This Bengalee was a man of great and varied abilities, a man of influence in Bengal, a poet, and sower broadcast of ideas - in short, a universal genius. The Prince's interest being aroused, he asked his chance acquaintance to take him to the poet's. An appointment was made in the evening. In answer to their knock at the door the grand portal was opened wide. Three men, robed in white, as Romans of old might have been, came forward in the feeble light of a lanthorn held by the central figure. They might have risen from the Catacombs, the Prince thought, after a sleep of seventeen hundred or more years. Their turbans, however, spoiled the effect. As soon as they had crossed the threshold the portal swung back. The three men led them up a palatial staircase to a well-ventilated, lighted, and spacious room, where the conducting Hindoos and another, also in white, welcomed them in Oriental fashion. Cushion, encased in blue silk, lay piled on a matted floor. The shelves round the room held 20,000 books. Ancient vases in bronze and other metals stood here and there, fascinating the eye. Curious paintings were hung on the walls.

Rabindranath Tagore works in this room. Time out of mind the Tagore family have held a great place in India, and particularly Calcutta. A long series of eminent men rooted and widened their influence. Four brothers are now living. Two are leading jurists, one is a musician. The youngest is the poet. Their graciousness charmed the Royal tourist. He noticed how their eyes blazed as they gave him a history of each antique object. Proud patriotism lit the fire. Servants with silent step brought in tea and cigarettes. Prince William lay down on a cushion to smoke and follow the conversation. Then entered a musician. He chose from the three musical instruments in the centre of the room an ancient one, caressed the strings with his fingers,

and, finding them in tune, played a peculiar melody akin to the cries, groans, and sighs of a fanatic. Sometimes his passion subsided into an infinitely plaintive, soft, melancholy strain. These passages were permeated with sounds of lamentation. They were the lament of a whole people, formerly the masters of half Asia, and now slaves.

After descanting on his host's loathing of British rule, prince William writes: "In all my life, I never spent moments so poignant as at the house of the Hindoo poet Rabindranath Tagore".

This confession is good "literature". Would it not be pardonable in a journalistic interviewer writing against time and afraid of being outdone by some rival pressman? But I would blame the journalist if, in extracting a book from his letters, he suffered any indiscretion to escape, and particularly in a cold-blooded correction of proof sheets. Social amenities ought then to guide his pen.

I doubt whether cautious Bengalee barristers and their poet brothers will be glad of the terms in which Prince William tells of the evening he spent at their house. He went there when bombs and pistol shots were flying about. They have been flying about ever since. The gentlemen of the I.C.S., heaped courteous attention on him. I wonder what his Royal British connections will think of the bit of tag at the close of the account of the soiree at Rabindranath Tagore's. That eminent Hindoo and his brothers seem to enjoy a good time at Calcutta. I dare say they like sad music, as young people full of the joy of life are fond of a good cry in attending the play or in reading a novel.

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25 December, 1913

**THE GLASGOW HERALD**

p9c5D.

### EAST AND WEST

"The Crescent Moon" 4s. 6d. net. - "Sadhana: The Realisation of Life" 5s. net. By Rabindranath Tagore (London: Macmillan and Co.)

In "The Crescent Moon" Mr. Tagore comes nearer to the spirit of the "Child's Garden of Verses" than any other has done; indeed, in some respects they are

even nearer to the child's mind without being farther from that world of romance in which R.L.S. placed his children. Many of them are real fairy tales - the tales that a small boy lives through every day - where nothing is what it seems to be, but just what the young creative spirit chooses that it shall be; and, read to children, they conjure up, with the genius of insight, the very world of sober wonder in which their lives are daily passed. Others, for parents like some of the best of Stevenson - are full of beauty and tenderness, and will scarcely be read without spiritual gain to the reader. It would be difficult to think of a more desirable Christmas gift, in the finest sense of the phrase; it proves that, whatever may be the case with men, so far as children are concerned East and West are purely one - that the child here and the little big man are the same everywhere. There are eight charming illustrations in colour.

The "Sadhana" comes mainly of lectures delivered at Oxford and at Harvard University, and is an exposition of Indian belief in eight chapters, in which the author shows the relation of man to the universe, discusses the nature of personality, the problems of evil and the self, and deduces the great truth that only by self-abnegation dictated by love does the self of man attain its highest realisation. The merely selfish life is as a lamp unlit, a foolish renunciation is as oil spilled; but a lit lamp is the image of self wisely given away, and so made manifest and joyous. A large proportion of the argument is occupied with the contrast between West and East, the former being too exclusively absorbed in the acquisition of power, the latter in the life of meditation. But, insists the true Brahman, power makes one dependent; love alone makes for freedom of soul; and the love must be an activity, finding its highest expression in beauty born of the joy of living. The book is singularly persuasive - everywhere it has the charm of Maeterlinck's *Tresors des Humbles* - and as a protest against the advancing spirit of materialism as clear and convincing as is it powerful. It has all the merits of a pellucid style, brightened with the abundant and illuminating illustrations and figures of a poet, so that one has equal pleasure in the thought and in the way the thought is unfolded. The book gives a new meaning to the ordinary Western conception of Indian belief; we see that in all that is best there is really nothing between us.

26 December, 1913

**MONTROSE STANDARD AND ANGUS AND MEARNS**

p6c2(2W)

**THE CRESCENT MOON.** By Rabindranath Tagore. (London: Macmillan and Co.) 4s. 6d. net.

Mr. Tagore has been very prominently before the literary world of late. It is only a short time since he first became known to a British audience by his prose translations from his own Bengali verse. These were found in the volume called "Gitangali". [sic] His mastery over what is to him an alien tongue was so complete, and the merit of his poems were so undeniable, that he won instant recognition. It is of child life and child thoughts that he sings in the "Crescent Moon". The achievement is not perhaps so notable as previous ones, but the thought is always poetic, while the phrasing is exquisite. We have in English literature several poets who have sung to and of children, and the best of these is possibly the eccentric poet-painter, William Blake. Tenderness and simplicity are the essentials in such poetry, and these Mr. Tagore has in the same degree as Blake. The child's thoughts and longings are interpreted by the imagination of the poet, and the result is fitting but strangely beautiful pictures. Weirdly suggestive is the poem entitled "On The Seashore" - "The sea surges up with laughter and pale gleams the smile of the seabeach. Death-dealing waves sing meaningless ballads to the children, even like a mother while rocking her baby's cradle. The sea plays with children, and pale gleams the smile of the sea-beach". In "Rainy Day" we have a brilliant description of the torrential down-pour which marks the rainy season in Bengal:- "Sullen Clouds are gathering fast over the black fringe of the forest. O child do not go out! The palm trees in a row by the lake are smiting their heads against the dismal sky; the crows with their draggled wings are silent on the tamarind branches, and the eastern bank of the river is haunted by a deepening gloom. Our cow is lowing loud, tied at the fence. O child, wait here till I bring her into the stall. Men have crowded into the flooded field to catch the fishes as they escape from the overflowing ponds; the rain water is running in rills through the narrow lanes like a laughing boy who has run away from his mother to tease her. Listen, some one is shouting for the

boatman at the ford. O child, the daylight is dim, and the crossing at the ferry is closed. The sky seems to ride fast upon the madly-rushing rain". Tender and dainty is the poem called "Paper Boats" "Day by day I float my paper boats one by one down the running stream In big black letters I write my name on them, and the name of the village where I live. I hope that someone in some strange land will find them and know who I am. I load my little boats with shiuli flowers from our garden, and hope that these blooms of the dawn will be carried safely to land in the night. I launch my paper boats and look up into the sky and see the little clouds setting their white bulging sails. I know not what playmate of mine in the sky sends them down the air to race with my boats! When night comes I bury my face in my arms and dream that my paper boats float on and on under the midnight stars. The fumes of sleep are sailing in them and then lading in then baskets full of dreams" In the "Hero", Mr. Tagore shows us that the imaginings and longings of the boy in India differ not a whit from those of the boys in our land. This particular boy would have his mother be placed in great danger that he might rescue her. "My brother would say, 'Is it possible?' I always thought he was so delicate!" Our village people would all say in amazement, "Was it not lucky that the boy was with his mother?" The book is very attractively got-up, and its appearance is made very distinctive by the inclusion of illustrations by Indian artists

27 December, 1913

**THE BIRKENHEAD NEWS**

p6c1(D)

**Section: NOTES ON BOOKS**

**"The Crescent Moon." - By Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.**

The land of the Crescent Moon is the domain of childhood, and this book of beautiful poetry proves abidingly that there at least life has a neutral ground, where distinctions of East and West are the idlest words, because the twain not only meet there, but are one flesh. For the actual world

about him is to the child merely the furniture of the greater world of his imagination, giving colour and atmosphere, of course, to that world, but not changing its nature. And so, if we compare these verses with Blake's "Songs of innocence", the only English poetry that can be placed beside them, we find that albeit Blake tells of chimney-sweepers and London streets, of lambs and shepherds, and though Mr. Tagore sings of banyan trees and boats tied to bamboo poles in a line, and of howling jackals, they are withal but like two children, each describing the toys of his own nursery. All that is essential is the same to both, and where Blake finds angels at night-time pouring blessing

"And joy without ceasing  
On each bud and bloom,  
And each sleeping bosom"

Mr. Tagore's vision of "the darkest earth surrounding with her arms countless homes furnished with cradles and beds, mothers' hearts and evening lamps, and young lives glad with a gladness that knows nothing of its value for the earth."

Of course, it is not without reason that the differences mentioned are unknown to childhood, and it is the great proof of Mr. Tagore's insight into child-nature - or, should we say, of his power of introspection? - that he has found it. It lies in the child's magical changing of values. Baby, in the poem "Superior", does not know the difference between the lights in the street and the stars; how then should he know that East is not West? Business is to him a stupid game to spoil the morning with, how much better to sit in the dusk with a broken twig. The moon that is entangled in the branches of the Kadam tree is for him no higher than mother when she watches his play from an upper window. And say you that the moon, could he catch it, were too big for his hands to hold? "When mother", he replies, "bends her face down to kiss us' does her face look very big?"

Because this poetry is so true in its interpretation of childhood, it is beautiful also in its understanding of motherhood. For a child-inspired book, if you open it, presents two pages; one tells of the love of the child, and the opposite page of the

mother's heart; close the book again, and the two are joined. In the poems that express this mother spirit, M. Tagore gives play to the mysticism that is a feature of all his verse. It is at its most beautiful in "The Beginning".

"Where have I come from, where did you pick me up?" the baby asked its mother.

She answered half-crying, half-laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast, 'You were hiding in my heart as its desire, my darling .. When in girlhood my heart was opening its petals, you hovered as a fragrance about it ... What magic has snared the world's treasure in these slender arms of mine?'"

The books of translations that have assured a place in our literature are few, for it does not suffice that the original done should have greatness, the translation must also be an independent masterpiece, with its own great qualities. Mr. Tagore has won his place as an English poet, perhaps the greatest English poet of this century, because his translations are things of rapturous beauty. For anything to compare with some of these prose-songs, with "The Source", for example, we have to do so to the enchantments of "The Midsummer Night's Dream", to a few passages of Keats and Shelley. Magic is the one name for them. With Mr. Tagore we do not feel any impatience to read the originals. We know that they will be of amazing loveliness but their beauty can hardly be greater than that of the English; it can only be different.

S.I.

27 December, 1913  
**THE INQUIRER**  
p821(W)

### THE REALISATION OF LIFE

There are times when the life of Nature appears to us an endless struggle of opposing forces, and the life of humanity an equally endless struggle of conflicting purposes. There are times when, by stress of thought, we rise above the confusing strife and discern a unity of the whole amid the conflict of its parts. And there are yet other times when,

through feeling, we *realise* that unity, and know that the world is one in the truth of its Law and the kinship of its Life. We may contend for ever as to the relative value of these differing moods of experience; but to all who think and feel, as well as behold and take part in the unending struggle, each of these attitudes of mind has its significance, and its claim to be reckoned with. Yet for those (if there be such) to whom the world of living beings is nought but a conflict of alien or competitive instincts, with self-preservation as the primal impulse, life can have no abiding worth or sufficing interest. And those who, by the aid of logical reason, discover, beneath or within the diverse conflicting forces, a unity of purpose or law which makes them one, may surely find "the good of the intellect," the serenity of philosophic calm. But those who, by insight and sympathy feel the kinship of life in all its forms, and hear beyond all discords the harmonies of the living universe - these have the fruition of its eternal joy, the solace of its illimitable peace.

The Indian seer and poet, Rabindranath Tagore, whose "Gitanjali, or Song Offerings," came to us as a glad surprise in the earlier part of the year, in giving us now a volume of prose "papers,"\* as he modestly calls them, reveals under the form of more philosophic expression the workings of a mind wherein the consciousness of unity and harmony is as the breath of life itself. He tells us in the preface that "the subject-matter of the papers has not been philosophically treated"; and it is true that, while striving to state in words the deeper realities of experience, and even when dealing with such questions as the "problem of evil," metaphysical speculation finds but small occasion in these pages. Nor is it needed. Here, as in the poems, the voice is the voice of the seer, the appeal is to the heart's intelligence, to the soul's intuition. As a life-long student of the great spiritual scriptures of the East - the Upanishads and the Buddhist writings - and also a not unsympathetic observer of Western habits and ideals of life, Rabindranath Tagore gives now to English readers the fruitage of his own vital experience, the truth as discerned through in-

sight and feeling, and knowledge of the actual world. The careful reader will discover in this book evidence of strenuous thought, of sincere effort to grapple with the difficulties which life presents to reason, demanding an intellectual solution. But his theme is so charged with emotion, the results of thought are so merged, or fused, in the glow of intense realisation, that we may easily miss them, as the writer lifts us away into the light and wonder and joy of his own vision.

There is, in truth, no lack either of critical or of constructive thinking here. The relative merits and demerits both of Eastern and Western ideals of life are exposed with the impartiality of a just and disillusioned mind. Our tendency, in the West, to regard life as a continuous fight with nature, a struggle to subdue or enslave her, lest she slay us, is contrasted with that passionate desire of the Indian mind to realise its *unity* with nature, its fellowship with the spirit that dwells in all creatures, and pervades the universe of being. The energy of purpose by which the intellect and industry of the West has achieved such great things in science and invention, and the mastery of material forces, receives its due need of praise. And the mistake of many Indian sages in laying too exclusive stress on the life of contemplation, as if in scorn of the life of action and of service with and for others, is exposed and condemned. Freedom *in* action, not freedom *from* action should have been their ideal. But these things are by the way. The great appeal is to insight to love, to the soul which is so much more than the individual self, with its personal cravings and private whims, the soul which is one with the Soul of the World, and by which we may enter into the joy of creation which claims us for its own. The great chapters on "Realisation in Love," "Realisation in Action," "The Realisation of Beauty," "The Realisation of the Infinite," offer us a conception of life of such absorbing interest and power, that, whether we can receive their message in its fullness or not, whether the writer's appeal rings wholly true for us or not, we must need acknowledge that here is the voice of a new religious and unpassioned experience, the song of a mystic whose eyes are open on the real world, whose heart has thrilled to the harmonies of secret, eternal things.

\*Sadhana. The Realisation of Life. London Macmillan & Co. 5s net

"Through our sense of truth we realise law in creation, and through our sense of beauty we realise harmony in the universe. When we recognise the law in nature we extend our mastery over physical forces and become powerful; when we recognise the law in our moral nature we attain mastery over self and become free. In like manner the more we comprehend the harmony in the physical world the more our life shares the gladness of creation, and our expression of beauty in art becomes more truly catholic. As we become conscious of the harmony in our soul, our apprehension of the blissfulness of the spirit of the world becomes universal, and the expression of beauty in our life moves in goodness and love towards the infinite. What does it matter if we fail to derive the exact meaning of this great harmony? It is not like the hand meeting the string and drawing out at once all its tones at the touch? Is it not the language of beauty, the caress, that comes from the heart of the world and straightaway reaches our heart?"

It is curiously interesting to watch this seer and poet playing (quite seriously) with the old yet ever new problems of philosophy — the one and the many, the finite and the infinite, the permanent and the transient, freedom and necessity.

With what serenity and softness of phrase, in language at times almost childlike in its simplicity, he deals, *e.g.*, with the problem of the *will*. In the soul of man "will seeks its manifestation in will and freedom turns to win its final prize in the freedom of surrender. Therefore, it is the self of man which the great king has not shadowed with his throne — he has left it free ... It is the man's self from which God has withdrawn his commands, for there he comes to court our love. His armed force, the laws of nature, stand outside the gate, and only beauty, the messenger of His love, finds admission within its precincts. It is only in this region of Will that anarchy is permitted, only in man's self that the discord of untruth and unrighteousness holds its reign." Yet this will is there only to learn in the last resort, as the perspective of life changes, how to supplant the narrow personal desires by surrender to the eternal laws. "Our self-will has freedom up to a certain extent; it can know what it is to break away from the path, but it cannot continue in that direction indefinitely ... Our will has freedom in

order that it may find out that its true course is towards goodness and love."

So with the relation of finite and infinite, of the self that only *becomes* and Brahma that eternally is. On the same page we meet with opposing sentences, such as, "All we can ever aspire to is to become more and more one with God." "Our existence is meaningless if we can never expect to realise the highest perfection there is. If we have an aim and yet can never reach it, then it is no aim at all." "Yes, *we must become Brahma*." And then, softly harmonising the apparent contradiction, comes the fuller statement: "There is the eternal play of love in the relation between this being and becoming; and in the depth of this mystery is the source of all truth and beauty that sustains the endless march of creation."

One or two unhappy phrases may be pointed out, in hope of change in later editions. "Man is abroad to satisfy needs which are more to him than food and clothing. *He is out to find himself*" (p.33). Surely the slang expression, "out to" achieve this or that, should be left to the platform or street corner orator; in such noble literature as this it is sadly out of place. "Pleasure and pain appear in a different meaning" (p.57) is not English; and "to realise one's life *in the infiniture* (ib.) suggests the comic spirit at play with the printer's type!

But let us turn from these small complainings and end this all inadequate appreciation of a great spiritual gift, with the music of the seer's words sounding in our ears: "Last night, in the silence which pervaded the darkness, I stood alone and heard the voice of the singer of eternal melodies. When I went to sleep I closed my eyes when I remain unconscious in slumber, the dance of life will still go on in the hushed arena of my sleeping body, keeping step with the stars. The heart will throb, the blood will leap in the veins, and the millions of living atoms of my body will vibrate in time with the note of the harp string that thrills at the touch of the Master"

W. J. J.

27 December, 1913

**THE NEW STATESMAN**

p374(W)

**Section: CURRENT LITERATURE  
BOOKS IN GENERAL**

The award of Nobel prize to Mr. Rabindranath Tagore was made known only a few weeks ago; but the Pall Mall Gazette has already announced that next year's winner will be Mr. Thomas Hardy. What this means I do not know; presumably it means that the prize is expected to go to an Englishman, and that if it does Mr. Hardy is the choice of the British academies who are entitled to nominate candidates. Considering that Mr. Kipling had the prize six years ago, the selection of Mr. Hardy cannot be described as premature. The first prize was awarded in 1901, but Mr. Kipling is the only Englishman who has ever won it, Meredith and Swinburne, besides Hardy, being amongst those passed over in his favour.

27 December, 1913

**THE SATURDAY REVIEW**

p815-816(W)

**A POET OF THE LOTUS**

**"Sadhana." "The Crescent Moon." By Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 5s. and 4s. 6d. net.**

MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE has in the last two years rapidly risen in the esteem of Europe - more especially of England. His late winning of the Nobel prize astonishes no one who realises how quickly a reputation is made by poet philosophers who are in tune with their generation. Mr. Tagore's success, like the success of Mr. Bergsen, is due to his catching the mind of Europe on its recoil from materialism. Perhaps the most popular philosophic thing in Europe to-day is a vague restoration of God and the soul in terms of biology or of mysticism. Mr. Tagore, interpreting Upanishads of the East, has hit a happy hour for filling the aching void of Europe, and he has met a correspondingly

high reward. He is the most successful medium of our time between East and West.

Inevitably, Mr. Tagore suggests M. Maeterlinck. Like the province of M. Maeterlinck, that of Mr. Tagore lies nearer to poetry than to philosophy. M. Maeterlinck, as a small poet playing with abstract ideas in the way that Shelley played with the cloud and star, is often tolerable, and sometimes catches at the skirts of beauty. But M. Maeterlinck, the philosopher, playing at thought, is vague and shallow. The Charlatan peeps through the garments of a philosopher, who, we instinctively feel, has not done a day's hard thinking in his life. Mr. Tagore, too, plays poet better than he plays philosopher, even though, as a philosopher, he has an advantage over M. Maeterlinck in being the interpreter of a wisdom not his own. Thus, when Mr. Tagore essays to define or to describe "soul-consciousness", the rock of his system, he tells us "how the touch of an infinite mystery passes over the trivial and the familiar, making it break out into ineffable music. The trees and the stars and the blue hills appear to us as symbols aching with a meaning which can never be uttered in words". A sentence further on he asks: "What is this state? It is like a morning of spring, varied in its life and beauty yet one and entire... The breach between the finite and the infinite fills with love and overflows: every moment carries its message of the eternal; the formless appears to us in the form of the flower: of the fruit, the boundless takes us up in his arms as a father and walks by our side as a friend". This, frankly, is mere favour and prettiness, and Mr. Tagore's books are full of it. It is not thought. It is the easy flowering of a contemplative mind into figurative expression, and, as this, it is just bearable, and of course immensely soothing to the multitude who like smoothness and non-resistance - images and ideas which are comfortable rather than stimulating.

Instinctively we think of these mystical poet-philosophers as merely players. They are the idle fruit of an idle time, coming in of a period which seems as if it rested before pushing into further adventure. Like M. Maeterlinck, Mr. Tagore, in his poetry as in his philosophy, appeals to the lazy folk. His words are comfortable so long as we do not trouble to ask what they mean. His poetry is mild and beautiful so long as we do not trouble to perceive that no stress of imagination, no wrestle with God, has stirred its contented murmur, or sounded

a challenge to the brain and soul of the reader. Open one of these small volumes and read that "a young pale beam of a crescent moon touched the edge of a vanishing autumn cloud, and there the smile was first born in the dream of a dew-washed morning - the smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps". We feel as though, mentally, we were sinking in of a pile of cushions. There is nowhere an arresting word, or an image that strikes against the mind's eye and is seen starkly clear. The sentence just murmurs along and falls recumbent. Read

30 December, 1913

PALL MALL GAZETTE

p10c5(DE)

[A quotation from 'Tagore in Woman's Page']

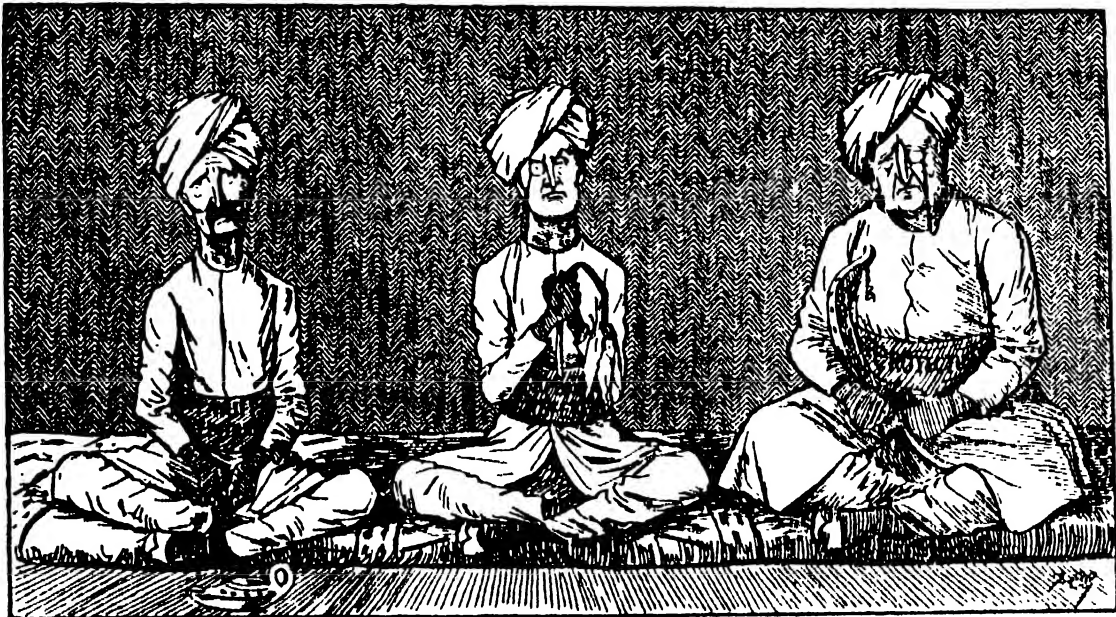
### A THOUGHT FOR WOMEN

**Do you know whence comes the sleep that floats over the eyes of a child? Yes, they tell us it has his home in the fairy village in the**

DECEMBER 31, 1913

THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

## THE MOURNERS.



"Why did the lamp go out? I shaded it with my cloak to save it from the wind, that is why the lamp went out."

"Why did the flower fade? I pressed it to my heart with anxious love, that is why the flower faded."

"Why did the harp-string break? I tried to force a note that was beyond its power, that is why the harp-string is broken."

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Fig. 17 A cartoon in *The Westminster Gazette*

31 December, 1913, p3

a hundred of such sentences, and we are soon at ease pillowed upon dulcet metaphors, warm beneath a coverlet of poetic pearls and flowers and all pretty things. Nothing hard or harsh is here. The world where creatures work and suffer, and are taken by the throat with wonder of pain or delight, recedes infinitely. We are upon the afternoon shore of the lotus-eaters.

**shadow of the forest. It is just faintly lighted by glow-worms and two sensitive magic flowers grow in it. Smiles come from that spot to kiss the eyelids of children.**

**Rabindranath Tagore**

31 December, 1913

**THE KELSO MAIL**

p2c1-2(W)

**Section: THE CAUSERIES OF ORION**

[This is a year-ending review of books published in that year. Only the relevant portion is cited here ]

... I have to thank the Messrs Macmillan for another of those charming books by the Hindu poet Rabindranath Tagore, translated by the author from the original Bengali, with a portrait of a gifted young man at the age of sixteen, by another Tagore, after a drawing by yet another, so that the Tagore's are evidently a gifted family. It is the 'Gardener' and it is characterised by the same beautiful thought beautifully expressed as was the former volume 'The Crescent Moon'. Here are a few examples of this prose poem -

"I will keep fresh the grassy path where you walk in the morning, where your feet will be greeted with praise at every step by the flowers eager for death. I will swing you on a swing among branches of the saptaparna, where the early evening moon will struggle to kiss your skirt through the leaves "

Again

"When she passed by me with quick steps, the end of her skirt touched me. From the unknown island of a heart came a sudden warm breath of spring. A flutter of a flitting touch brushed me and vanished in a moment, like a torn flower petal blown in the breeze. It fell upon my heart like a sigh of her body and whisper of her heart".

The whole book is full of this delicate ethereal fancy and charm ...

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**1914**

*3 January, 1914*

**THE DAILY CITIZEN**

p4c4(D)

**BOOKS IN 1914**

**A SEARCH FOR A GENIUS**

**By A. E. Manning Foster**

\* \* \*

**DO PRIZES AND PETTING SPOIL POETS?**

And what of our mystical poet-philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore? I hope Nobel Prizes and much petting will not spoil him, and that he will drop a certain tendency to affection and return to the simplicity of his Gitanjali. So with Yoshio Markino, whose idiosyncrasies and way of writing English get rather on one's nerves. Let him become again our laughing philosopher, and his work will be more valuable and more amusing.

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*3 January, 1914*

**THE DUNDEE ADVERTISER**

p6c7(D)

**THE POET FROM BENGAL**

**Rabindranath Tagore and His Appeal to East and West**

(From a Correspondent)

In that interesting survey of "The Book Year" in the "Advertiser" of December 30th, the poetry of the distinguished Bengali whose name stands at the head of this article is spoken of as the silver lining to our cloud in the sky of English poetical production. "The genius which has deserted English poets has appeared with splendid results" in him. "to show us that the gift of poetry is not dead." True

words; which suggest that some little account of the poet and his works may not be uninteresting to the general newspaper reader.

The award of the Nobel Prize in Literature this year to this great scholar, philosopher, poet, mystic of the East has made his name familiar throughout the English speaking world. A distinguished name it is in Calcutta; members of his family have rendered high service to the State. One of them was chosen to represent Calcutta at the Coronation of King Edward; another (we have been told) founded a Somaj, a school of eclectic philosophy and religion, in which all the best of all philosophy and all religion was picked out for the final expression of wisdom. But the Nobel Prizeman is the greatest of them all.

**The Labourer's Poet**

For he is great as a lecturer; in London and Oxford lately he charmed the most critical hearers. He is great as a philosopher; the first reading of his book on "The Realisation of Life" is a day to mark in red on one's literary calendar. He is great as a poet; his "Gitanjali or Song Offerings", published last March, simply "took the town" of literary folks; they have been reprinted some ten times since then; W. B. Yeats has declared that in their thought they display "a world I have dreamed of all my life long". And he is greatest of all in this - that he has touched the common heart of his fellow-countrymen. The Indian labourer sings his verses to lighten his toil. "Give me the making of my country's songs, and let who will make her laws".

Who shall prophesy what great issues are bound up in the appearance of this Eastern genius and in this first presentation of the Nobel Prize to a Bengali? What infinite possibilities, e.g., of a better understanding between the Indian mind and the Government of India. "No, no", said Charles Lamb, "don't introduce me to that man; I don't want to know him. For I hate what he stands for. And I want to hate him. And you can't hate a man once you know him". It may be that Tagore will be our Pontifex, - and greater as a bridge builder than either as a poet or a philosopher. For, by the way, these books of his, written in Bengali - "full of subtlety of rhythm, or untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention", according to Indian scholars - are by himself translated into delightful English.

### Books in English

These books in English are as follows: "Gitanjali, or Song Offerings", a collection of prose translations made by the author from the original Bengali, with an introduction by W. B. Yeats (full of Swinburnian superlatives!); "The Gardener", another of the same, but love poems of early youth this time, already reviewed in these columns, "The Crescent Moon" - an Indian Child's "Garden of Verses", let us call it; and "Sadhana" or "The realisation of Life", a series of lectures delivered, most of them in Harvard University. It is this last book, of course, that will give most pleasure to the ordinary intelligent reader of books. For poetry in translation, and especially the poetry of mysticism, can never hope to make any but a limited appeal.

Here is a typical extract of Tagore at his best, taken from his chapter on Soul Consciousness:- "There was a time when the earth was only a nebulous mass, whose particles were scattered far apart through the expanding force of heat; when she had not yet attained her definiteness of form, and had neither beauty nor purpose, but only heat and motion. Gradually, when her vapours were condensed into a unified rounded whole through the force that strove to bring all straggling matters under the control of a centre, she occupied her proper place among the planets of the solar system, like an emerald pendant in a necklace of diamonds. So with our soul. When the neat and motion of blind impulses and passions distract it on all sides we can neither give nor receive anything truly. But when we find our centre in our soul by the power of self-restraint, by the force that harmonises all warring elements, and unifies those that are apart, then all our isolated impressions reduce themselves to wisdom, and all our momentary impulses of heart find their completion in love; then all the petty details of our life reveal an infinite purpose, and all our thoughts and deeds unite themselves inseparably in an eternal harmony."

### The Problem of Evil

The following sentences again are taken from his chapter on the problem of all problems. The

Problem of Evil:- "If we kept the searchlight of our observation turned upon the fact of death, the world would appear to us like a huge charnel-house; but in the world of life the thought of death has, we find, the least possible hold upon our minds. Not because it is the least apparent, but because it is the negative aspect of life; just as, in spite of the fact that we shut our eyelids every second, it is the openings of the eyes that count. Life as a whole never takes death seriously. It laughs, dances, and plays; it builds, hoards, and loves in death's face. Only when we detach one individual fact of death do we see its blankness and become dismayed. We lose sight of the wholeness of a life of which death is part. It is like looking at a piece of cloth through a microscope. It appears like a net, we gaze at the big holes, and shiver in imagination. But the truth is, death is not the ultimate reality. It looks black, as the sky looks blue; but it does not blacken existence, just as the sky does not leave its stain on the wings of a bird."

These are the words that stir to thought, and supply at least a corrective to much of the current "nature red in tooth and claw" philosophy of to-day. For the final truth about Man's place in Nature was not that which was spoken (say) by Huxley, with his famous illustration of the game at chess - man against nature, his enemy sleepless and relentless. But to see life steadily and to see it whole we must combine the opposing truths of Huxley and Tagore.

To know where to begin or end is the difficulty in the matter of quotations from his poetry. But let this single strain suffice - chosen not less for its wise counsel to us Westerners at the beginning of a new year than for its beauty and charm - it is taken from his Gitanjali:-

"O fool, to try to carry thyself upon thy own shoulders! O beggar to come to beg at thy own door!"

"Leave all thy burdens in his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret."

"Thy desire at once puts out the light from the lamp it touches with its breath. It is unholy - take not thy gifts through its unclean hands. Accept only what is offered by sacred love".

3 January, 1914

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p6c3-5 D

[This is a long report on the survey of literature during 1913. Only the relevant paragraph is cited here.]

A survey of the field of literature during 1913 shows the year to have been on the whole an uneventful one. ...Interest centered in the first place on the choice of Mr. Robert Bridges for the laureatship, vacant by the death of Mr. Alfred Austin. The choice created some surprise in certain apparently unknown. Possibly if the laureates were appointed by a plebiscite based on the voter's roll, Mr. Bridges might not have stood much chance of election; but much of the talk indulged in people who should have known better was simple fatuous. Mr. Bridges was unknown only to those who do not read poetry. The second outstanding event was the award of the Nobel prize for literature to the Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore. This writer has only swum into the ken of European watchers within the last year with the publication of three volumes of translations from his own Bengali poems. Possibly geographical as well as purely literary considerations have had share in the promptitude with which his talent has received official recognition; but few who have read his charming lyrics will question his worthiness to receive the international award.

5 January, 1914

**EVENING STANDARD AND  
ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE**

p10c4(DF)

**Section: TODAY'S TABLE TALK**

How do we pronounce Rabindranath Tagore? There seems to be a considerable doubt how the name of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore should be pronounced. The "New York Sun" gives the puzzle in the form of verse:

"The bard of Bengal hoary  
Rabindranath Tagore."

Is that it? Or

"Rabindranath Tagore  
He made a splendid score."

The final confession is:-

"He's worthy of all fame  
So I feel much to blame  
In owning, to my shame  
I can't pronounce his name"

6 January, 1914

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p4c2(D)

**POET AND PHILOSOPHER**

THE CRESCENT MOON. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp.xii.82. 4s. 6d. net.

SADHANA. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp. xi.161. 5s. net.

The name Rabindranath Tagore, which has long been a household word in India, is fast becoming one in England also. Only a little while ago he gave us in "The Gardener" a series of "songs of love and life", and these are now followed by a series of Child Poems, and by a popular exposition of the philosophical teaching of the Upanishads. It was natural enough that Mr. Tagore should have chosen to translate first the work which most adequately represents him. He remains, and will, we think, remain, here primarily the author of "The Gitanjali". The Gitanjali were mystical in theme and the featureless limpidity of the English prose into which their author translated them produced the rarefied atmosphere appropriate to this and heightened their appeal. The marriage of manner and matter was not so perfect in "The Gardener", and in "The Crescent Moon", also, charming as many of the numbers are, the very fact that the themes are light sometimes makes the exquisite composure with which Mr. Tagore presents them a little oppressive. Throughout the volume there runs, of course, a vein of mystical

suggestion, and childhood in its innocence and imaginative freedom is a symbol of spiritual achievement. Perhaps the poet does not recognise how firmly the child ensconces himself as the centre and king of the imaginative world he creates. But we must not handle roughly the bloom on these soft and fragrant pages, which will prove to any who doubted it that in the East the child has the same waywardness and compels the same devotion as in the West.

The chief value of the series of lectures, "Sadhana", will be in its tendency to correct the misinterpretations to which the religion and philosophy of India is exposed in this country. It is widely believed that the life of action is condemned by Buddhism, and that Nirvana is simply the disappearance of the individual in the universal life. But Mr. Tagore points out that the value of self is recognised in the sacred books as well as the necessity of its manifestation in action, and that in attributing ideas of complete self-negation to their teaching we take sayings which apply only to that part of the self which is evil as if they applied to self as a whole. The result of his corrections of our prejudice is that he appears wonderfully close in feeling and outlook to such thinkers as Emerson or, more recently, Edward Caird. His phraseology of transcendence has a thoroughly familiar sound, and it could truly be said that there is not a thought he utters but could be found in their pages. Such coincidence has an exhilarating effect upon the mind and forces us to believe that the differences of practical attitude to life which now part East and West cannot ultimately prove insuperable.

B. S.

10 January, 1914

### THE INQUIRER

p31(W)

#### Section: NOTES AND JOTTINGS

#### HONOURING RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Towards the close of November a deputation consists of about 500 people (one paper says 600), several of whom were Europeans, visited Mr. Tagore at his residence, Santiniketan (the Home of Peace), Bolpur, to felicitate him on receiving the Nobel Prize for

literature. The Rev. C. F. Andrews, wearing *dhori* and *chaddar*, and a number of students from Mr. Tagore's school in yellow robes, met the pilgrims at the station and conducted them along the road, which was decorated with mango and lotus leaves and festoons of flowers, to their destination. There, under the mango trees, the poet was seated, "the handsome figure and the beautiful, meditative eyes", flowing hair and picturesque robes, all combining "to present a perfect picture of the best type of Aryan Philosopher". A short Bengali address printed on silk was presented, and congratulations offered by various speakers, after which Mr. Tagore thanked the deputation, saying, in his characteristic way, that he had never longed for fame; his claim was to the heart. Mr. Andrews, who has just arrived in South Africa, to investigate the problem which is affecting all India so deeply, has addressed a meeting of Indians to whom he read a poem in Sanskrit written by Mr. Tagore as a message to his distressed fellow-countrymen.

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12 January, 1914

### THE DAILY CHRONICLE

p6c4(D)

#### MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S SCHOOL

#### THE "ASRAM" OF THE GREAT BENGALI POET

By J. Ramsay Macdonald M.P.

The reaction against what is absurdly called the "British tone" in Indian education is receiving the support of some of the best minds in India today. A short time ago I went to see that educational embodiment of the Arya Somaj spirit, the Gurukula at Hondwar, and on my way from Delhi to Calcutta I spent a day at the Santiniketan (Literally "the abode of peace"), near Bolpur, where Rabindranath Tagore has his school.

Bolpur is on a side line upon which trains linger long and where every station has its kaleidoscopic crowd of bustling, chattering, brightly coloured humanity. It runs through a flat plain broken

by paddy fields and clumps of palm trees. It was harvest-time and, as we dawdled along, there was plenty of time to watch the ingathering of the rice. In nearly every field there were little black things busy, some with the sickle, some tying the cut straw into bundles. It was mid-afternoon when I started the 40 miles journey on the loop-line, but night had fallen and fires were gleaming from the grass huts before Bolpur was reached. Out for over a mile through the village and into the plain I was driven, and found night's abode in a large house hidden amongst trees, the home of Rabindranath Tagore.

Some half-century ago Maharsi Devendranath, the Poet's father, finding that an unbroken attention to the affairs of the world was not good for the soul, sought some secluded spot where he might occasionally retire for solitary meditation, and under two chatim trees which grow on the plain he found it. There he could sit under the shade with nothing but the vast flat of untilled land, green after the rains but a brick-dust desert under the sun, in front of him, and think of Him who, according to the carving on the marble seat and tablet which now mark the spot, "is indeed the rest of my heart, the peace of my mind and the joy of my soul." There he built an "asram," a house where the devout might dwell whilst on devotional mission, and a kind of a chapel where for about 40 years prayers were said daily. But no one went there except the Tagores, and it looked as though the place, like so many similar places in India, was to fall into decay with him who built and endowed it.

### THE HOUSE OF THE DEVOUT

But the son, Rabindranath, desired otherwise. A garden of trees had grown up round the house. The area of shaded peace had extended, and here he proposed to found a school. Thus, since 1901, the voices of children have broken the solitude of the waste. Dormitories thatched with grass were built and were filled. Masters' houses appeared in sheltered places and red and purple creepers covered them. The waste became playing fields. When I was there about 190 boys and 20 masters were in the settlement.

It is difficult to explain the feelings which possess one who goes to such institutions. They have

nothing to do with Government; their staff is not official; their system is not an enforced mechanical routine. At the Santiniketan they complained that when their boys reached the University matriculation standard, educational methods had to be adopted which the teachers regretted. These schools are native to the soil like the trees which grow out of it. They are therefore not incongruous, and a lack of incongruity must surely be a test imposed upon every national system of education. Here India leans upon herself and issues from herself. There is no attempt made to impose something foreign, to uproot or to force; no necessity to guard alien methods by alien instructors. The teachers are Indian, Indian in their thoughts, in their habits, in their sympathies, in their dress. Government aid has been refused because the conditions under which it would be given could not be acceptable. "They would have made my boys sit on benches," said Mr. Tagore with a quiet smile, "whereas I think it far better that they should sit on mats under the trees." Hence, as with the Gurukula at Hordwar, so with this school, it has been frowned upon; it has been put on the police black list; attempts have been made to suppress it; it has been the subject of threatening official circulars issued to parents. The persecution has only endeared it to its founder. It has been kept going at the cost of much sacrifice. Into its exchequer Mr. Tagore has put not only the Nobel Prize, but the royalties on his books.

### ART MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

Let no one misunderstand that the meaning of this movement back towards Indian sources. Abanindranath, the painter, cousin of the poet, has expressed it regarding Indian art. "The main feature of the present art movement in Bengal is not, as supposed by many, an attempt to retire and remain immersed in the past ... It is clearly seen that our present art movement accepts tradition as the great motive force which must impel us forward, whereas the art teaching started with the idea of training up the Indians in the so-called European methods of art persistently ignores tradition as a living source of all fresh art movements. The result is the increased originality and freshness of thought in one case and the marked decrease of individuality and

vigour in the case of Indian artists trained in European art." That is true of education too. The spirit of the artist is also that of the poet-teacher.

I awoke early in the morning whilst the dawn was still but a tinge of light in the darkness. Outside there was sweet singing, and I was told that every morning the school choir went round the gardens chanting hymns. The day is closed in the same way. For a quarter of an hour in the morning and in the evening the boys sit in meditation. Twice a week they assemble in the chapel for common worship and Rabindranath speaks to them and exhorts them to good living. They do all their own housework even to their washing, and their clothes are spotless. There used to be a manager, but they have recently dispensed with his services and elect from themselves a committee to do his work. One of the results is that in the purchase of rice alone a saving of a hundred rupees a month is being made. This practice of self-government runs throughout the school. The masters elect from amongst themselves a head who acts for a year, but who may be re-elected. The present principal, Mr. Roy, has been chosen three times. Discipline is enforced and punishments meted out by captains and courts of school justice elected every month by the boys. There are small causes and appellate courts created in this way, and they decide at least once a fortnight all cases which arise in the life of the classes and the playground. "There were many difficulties at first," I was told, "but they have been overcome, and the advantages of self-government are worth purchasing at the price of initial failures."

### INSTRUCTING THE MASSES

Moreover, the Santiniketan is no mere seminary for the education of boys. It is alive with the life of India. It is aware of what is going on outside. It shares in the larger Indian life. The particular interest of the school at the moment is the enlightenment of the mass. They asked me to speak to the boys, and I inquired as to the subject. "Tell us," they said, "how the masses may be instructed." They had really been answering me that question themselves and showing me in practice how to do it. For under the trees I had seen an interesting sight. The villages around are inhabited by the aboriginal Santals, and the boys of the school go out

sometimes with football or bat and begin a game. When a crowd has gathered the game is stopped and the players talk of knowledge to the villagers. From this an evening class is formed and the Santiniketan boys go out and teach in it. The day I was there about a dozen of these children had come in and were being taught under a tree. They were lively imps with wide interested eyes and so full of life that they could not keep still. They were being shown the delights of the stereoscope and were being taught to describe accurately what they saw. Two boys were looking after them. It was their tribute to India and their service to the reincarnated motherland to which all their youthful enthusiasm was devoted.

I left them sitting class by class on their little mats under the "chatim" trees, their books by their side, and their teachers in their midst. They smiled and chatted as I passed. Everything was peaceful, natural, happy. And I went away into another world where worthy and well-meaning graduates from Oxford and Cambridge were toiling and perspiring like blacksmiths with heavy hammers to beat and bend the Indian mind into strange forms on strange anvils, and where there is unhappiness and sadness of heart – unloving whispers instead of laughter, doubt instead of hope.

*14 January, 1914*

### THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

p284(W)

### A Poet of Ind

#### "The Gardener"

Most of us have in past days laughed at the monstrosities of Babu English, and it is easy enough for us, who lack sympathy with the Oriental mind, and regard all dark-skinned persons with the blunt and coarse Anglo-Saxon minds, to shout when we open the book before us, and read its strange poems, we can laugh no more. This little book of prose poems is written by a Hindu; it is translated from the Bengali into our difficult speech by a man who is master of the purest and loveliest English speech. It is dedicated, and not unworthily, to Mr. W. B.



**INDIA'S NOBEL PRIZE WINNER. CONGRATULATING MR. RABINDRA NATH TAGORE**

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the poet of Young India, is here seen covered with lotus leaves, seated on a dais, and receiving an address of congratulation at the village of Bampur, where he has a large school for boys. The address was conveyed from Calcutta in a special train, by a deputation numbering over 1000 persons. The 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature amounts to about \$2000, and the Bengali poet proposes to devote the money to establishing and maintaining a students' religious association.

**Fig. 18 Photograph of the reception of Tagore at Santiniketan** *The Graphic*  
17 January, 1914, p56

Yeats. And a native of India comes forward to add a new charm to our tongue, and to teach a new and lovely utterance

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, in his little book (Macmillan, 7s 6d net), gives us a third song-offering. This one book is sufficient to show that the writer is an exquisite poet and sees very deeply into the things of the soul. He writes English as Maeterlinck writes French, with a studious simplicity, using scarcely a single word that a child could not understand. Like

Maeterlinck, too, he is profoundly a mystic, and his song-snatches have a power of carrying the soul out of itself into the land of far distances. He calls himself the Gardener, and culls faint, sweet blooms to lay at his lady's feet. He approaches the portals of the mystic shrine by with the magic of India; the langour of hot days and swooning nights, the strong scents of the enclosed garden; the sights and sounds of the vivid life of that strange land; and yet they are of the essential stuff of poetry, and strike a note to which the

universal heart responds. We seem back again in the atmosphere of the Song of Songs, and the stuff English tongue takes on a quality of wistfulness and elusive sadness that somehow recalls to us the passionate imagery of that wonderful book of the bible. They are short, these poems, "fitful, momentary rhythms," yet, again and again, he has wrought his dreams into a golden song. Here is a stanza that may give a touch of this magic quality:

Hands cling to hands and eyes linger on eyes  
thus begins the record of our hearts.

It is the moonlit night of March, the sweet smell  
of henna is in the air; my flute lies on the earth  
neglected and your garland of flowers is unfinished

The love between you and me is simple as a song

Perhaps the best criticism would be to set down  
a whole poem; I choose number 27.

"Trust love even if it brings sorrow. Do not close  
up your heart,"

"Ah, no, my friend, your words are dark, I cannot  
understand them"

"The heart is only for giving away with a tear  
and a song, my love"

"Ah, no, my friend, your words are dark, I cannot  
understand them"

"Pleasure is frail like a dewdrop, while it laughs  
it dies. But sorrow is strong and abiding. Let sorrow-  
ful love wake in your eyes"

"Ah, no, my friend, your words are dark, I cannot  
understand them."

"The lotus blooms in the sight of the sun, and  
loses all that it has. It would not remain in bud in  
the eternal winter mist."

"Ah, no, my friend, your words are dark, I cannot  
understand them."

If one might venture a criticism, one would suggest that there is a want of fresh free air in this poems. But that is just what India lacks, so we must not complain. You can come back again and again to these verses and find in them new depths and new beauties. Lovers of poetry should not fail to procure this book.

J Macartney Wilson

17 January, 1914

THE NEW STATESMAN

p472-473(W)

## INDIAN THOUGHT AND DREAM

**Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.** By the SISTER NIVEDITA (MARGARET E. NOBLE) and ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY With thirty-two illustrations in colour by Indian artists under the supervision of Abanindro Nath Tagore, C.I.E. Harrap. 15. net

**SADHANA: The Realisation of Life.** By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Macmillan 5s. net.

*Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists* was planned and begun by that Sister Nivedita whose strange life and splendid work are more than ever familiar to us since Mr Ratcliffe's recent memoir "Hinduism," she wrote, "is, in fact, an immense synthesis, deriving its elements from a hundred different directions, and incorporating every conceivable mode of religion." There is something almost appalling, something of the vastness and mystery we attribute to the mere physical facts of the East, in the range and number of the myths here recorded. The brief introductory chapter explains how the two stages of mythology need representation - the early, in which men viewed the whole universe in a "humanified form", and the later, in which "the glory of stellar worlds paled before human greatness." As in other histories, the Hindu legends have been gathered together only at intervals in each main gathering different stages of development are represented, and incongruities appear. Constantly, too, there is an interplay of three different conceptions - polytheism, monotheism, and pantheism. Indeed, it is no paradox to say that all these three words stand symbolic for that one idea, of God's manifestation in and through the world, which is omnipresent in the religions and philosophies of the East.

The first story given us here is the Ramayana, which idealises a division of castes differing from that of Plato's *Republic* in that it does not allow for transference from one rank to another. The apparent harshness of this is modified by the doctrine of reincarnation and *karma*, hereditary place is not accidental, but just (what an argument for the House

of Lords<sup>1</sup>), to each caste belongs its appropriate morality "Over against this human world of the silver age is drawn the sinful and inhuman world of the rakshasas," but even these devils have virtue among themselves: their wickedness is directed against gods and humans. In the Ramayana we find, too, "whispers and echoes of the great animal apes of primitive man". There is a familiar suggestion about the beginning of the story. A certain rakshasa greatly plagued the deities, who could not destroy him because Brahma had granted him a boon of immunity. But the immunity excluded the operation of *men*: if a god was to destroy the rakshasa, he must become man. Vishnu consented, to this end, to take birth as the four sons of the good King Dasharatha, and one of these was Rama. We wish we had space to give some details of the legend: we must be content to quote from its conclusion: "All sin is washed away from those who read or hear it read."

Of even wider interest is "the Indian national saga", the Mahabharata, where "the story of a divine incarnation, Krishna, as he is called, has been wrought into and upon an immense ballad and military epic of unknown antiquity" Of the remaining tales, the one most moving and significant is naturally that of Buddha, whose teaching struck at the excessive power of priests and exalted a pure faith – but a faith already almost wholly found in Hinduism. The legends that have gathered round this historic figure are less entrancing than the essentials of his doctrine.

The idea of impermanence, of the inevitable connection of sorrow with life and of life with desire, the doctrine of rebirth, of *karma* (every man must reap what he himself sows), and a complex formal psychology – all these belong to the intellectual atmosphere of the Buddha's own time. Where he differed most profoundly from the Brahmins was in his denial of soul, of any enduring entity in man apart from temporary associations producing the illusion of a person and *ego*. Yet even this difference is more apparent than real, and we find in later times that it became almost impossible to distinguish between the Buddhist "Void" and the Brahman "Self". For the distinguishing characteristic of each is the absence of any characteristics at all; each is other than Being, and other than Non-Being.

Lest this passage should in isolation be misunderstood, let us put beside it a sentence of Rabindranath Tagore:

When we find that the state of Nirvana preached by Buddha is through love, then we know for certain that Nirvana is the highest culmination of love. For love is an end unto itself.

Probably the austere beauty in the Buddhist doctrine or release from desire by the way of right living and right thinking is that which, of Eastern lore, appeals most easily to the West. The vitality informing the mysticism of both Brahmanism and Buddhism, the union of moral purpose with philosophic subtlety and religious intuition – these we recognise admiringly in the second as in the first of the books before us. But somehow, somewhere – presumably in the author's use, melodious and powerful though it is, of a language not his own – the vigorous inspiration of originality seems to have escaped. It would be foolish to deny that Mr. Tagore is a very inspiring teacher: to pretend that his greatness is fully apparent in these essays would be as foolish. The first essay, on the Relation of the Individual to the universe, provides a salutary rebuke to the pride and business of the West. We are the Martha to India's Mary: she, we are more than half told, has chosen the better way:

The ideal that India tried to realise led her best men to the isolation of a contemplative life, and the treasures that she gained for mankind by penetrating into the mysteries of reality cost her dear in the sphere of worldly success.

But worldly success is clearly a poor thing. "Our possessions are our limitations." The West regards nature as hostile, obstructive, India "included the world with the man as one great truth". The soul of everything is to be perceived by the soul in man, man's superiority in the scale of creation "is not in the power of possession, but in the power of union". We attain by giving ourselves away "Our soul can realise itself truly only by denying itself". So with the bewildering problem of evil. Evil is imperfection: to ask why it exists is to ask why there is creation at all. We must in fact take it for granted. "This is the real question we ought to ask. Is this imperfection the final truth, is evil absolute and ultimate?" The answer, of course, is

"No", The essence of evil is impermanence. An imperfection for its ideal "Must go through a perpetual realisation". "To live in perfect goodness is to realise one's life in the infinitive". "As we make progress we find that pain, disease, and poverty of power are not absolute, but that it is only the want of adjustment of our individual self to our universal self which gives rise to them". All this is very true: but can the most elementary student of ethics forbear the thought that he has heard it all before? Has it not the vagueness, the inapplicability, of the platitude? Might not irreverence even recall the philosopher in Johnson's *Rasselas*, who "rose up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system?" There are, no doubt, few final truths, and they have all been spoken long ago. Confronted by this melancholy fact, George, in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, "was driven to dress up three paradoxes. They are false indeed, but they were new". Yet there is a better way of originality than that. It is to re-state the known with the compelling and urgent beauty of revelation, to light the heart to its own depths, to give truth not merely a new expression, but a new reality. Great poets and great prophets do this: we have no doubt that Rabindranath Tagore does it in his own language. But in this book we find what we want only in stray phrases quoted from the sources of his thought - as in this from one of the Upanishads: "It is not that thou lovest thy son because thou desirest him, but thou lovest thy son because thou desirest thine own soul".

It must be added that both books are charmingly produced. For the form of *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists* no praise could be too high; the illustrations are not only really illustrative, but beautiful in themselves and beautifully reproduced.

24 January, 1914

#### THE BIRKENHEAD NEWS

p6c5(2W)

**"Sadhana. The Realisation of Life," by Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan and Co. 5s.**

This prose work from the pen of the great Indian mystic, whose poems have met with such success

in this country and whose genius has been recognised by the Nobel Prize Committee, will meet with a warm welcome from his many admirers, for it explains the source of the religious inspiration found in his work. The minority of the papers published in this volume were read before the scholars of Harvard University, and their author acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. Ernest Rhys for suggestions and revisions in the printed text. The hope is expressed that western readers, too often accustomed to think of the heathen in his uncultured blindness will have the opportunity of coming into touch with the ancient spirit of India as revealed in the sacred texts of the Upanishads and manifested in the life of to-day. "All the great utterances of man," writes the poet wisely, "have to be judged not by the letter but by the spirit - the spirit which unfolds itself with the growth of life in history. We get to know the real meaning of Christianity by observing its living aspect at the present moment - however different it may be, even in important respects from the Christianity of earlier periods. For western scholars the great religious scriptures of India seem to possess merely a retrospective and archaeological interest, but to us they are of living importance, and we cannot help thinking that they lose their significance when exhibited in labelled cases, mummied specimens of human thought and aspiration, preserved for all time in the wrappings of erudition. To me the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them both in my own life and preaching, as being instinct with individual meaning for me as for others, and awaiting for their confirmation, my own special testimony, which must have its value because of its individuality."

The book abounds with beautiful thoughts and passages of mental stimulation. Of the relation of the individual to the universe he says:

"When man's consciousness is restricted only to the immediate vicinity of his human self the deeper roots of his nature do not find their permanent soul; his spirit is ever on the brink of starvation, and in the place of healthful strength he substitutes rounds of stimulation."

In the paper headed "Soul Consciousness" he writes:

"Man's poverty is abysmal, his wants are endless till he becomes conscious of his soul. For a man who has realised his soul there is a determinate centre of the universe around which all else can find its proper place, and from thence only can he draw and enjoy the blessedness of a harmonious life."

Again,

"The emancipation of our physical nature is in attaining health of our social being in attaining goodness, and of our self in attaining love."

"Civilisation must be judged, and prized, not by the amount of power it has developed, but by how much it has evolved and given expression to, by its laws and institutions, the love of humanity."

There is much food for careful thought and reflection in this volume. It sounds a high note, and the many world-problems upon which it touches are rendered all the more interesting by seeing as they appear to the Eastern mind of a great prophet.

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24 January, 1914

**THE NATION**

p716(W)

## **FROM THE UNREAL TO THE REAL**

**"Chitra." A Play in One Act. By**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

**(Published for the India Society at the  
Chiswick Press.)**

The India Society, through which the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore was first made accessible to English readers, has now placed his admirers under a further debt of gratitude by issuing to the public, as a companion volume to the already rare first impression of "Gitanjali," a limited edition of his lyrical drama, "Chitra," translated into English prose. This is the first of his plays to appear in book form in this country. Those, then, who did not see

the performance of "The Post Office" by the Irish Players in July last, or hear any of Mr. Tagore's own readings of the remarkable mystic drama, "The King of the Dark Chamber," here make the acquaintance of his dramatic mood for the first time.

"Chitra" is a short play; it has but one act, divided into nine scenes. Written twenty-five years ago, in the period to which many of the songs in "The Gardener" belong, it has more affinities with the romantic yet warmly human temper of that book than with the intense spirituality of "Gitanjali." Yet here already, some of the notes most characteristic of "Gitanjali" are struck. In one of the most remarkable poems of that collection, Tagore is found insisting, as his spiritual ancestor, Kabir, had done before him, on the splendour and reality of the common life accepted in its wholeness, as the proper theatre of human effort: the discovery of God, not in some abstract region of truth and beauty, but in things as they are - amongst the struggles and imperfections of the temporal flux.

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.

"Put off thy holy mantle, and even like him come down to the dusty soil."

"Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow."

In these lines are summed up the idea-plot of "Chitra." Love - durable love - the supreme manifestation of God, is found only by coming to grips with the reality of the here-and-now, an acceptance of the stuff of existence. Man will not be satisfied with anything less or anything lovelier than truth; he demands, not the illusion of perfection, but the concrete reality in all its imperfection - "an imperfection which is yet noble and grand," as Chitra says in the speech which sums up and concludes the play. It must not be supposed from this, however, that the idea plot is over-prominent in "Chitra," or that it is the intention of the present reviewer to extract a wholesome moral from that which is primarily a beautiful work of art. The discovery of spiritual meanings in every sentence which he pens is a proceeding calculated to embitter the most sweet-tempered of poets; and, if prosecuted with

sufficient vigour and tactlessness, it will end by obscuring the true merit and character of his poems. Uncritical disciples of the "new mysticism," please note.

Now, "Chitra" is primarily a poem: from the point of view of Western criticism, more truly poem than play. There is in it much atmosphere, but little action; unless this term be held to apply to purely emotional and spiritual developments. The story is founded upon – or rather, arises out of – a legend in the Mahabharata; telling how Arjuna, wandering in fulfilment of a vow of penance, came to Manipur, and there fell in love with Chitrangada, only daughter of the King. She, because of her father had no heir, had received a boy's education, and been treated in all ways as a son. Arjuna married her upon the understanding that, should they have a son, he should be regarded not as the descendant of his race, but as the perpetuator of the royal line of Manipur. He lived with Chitrangada for three years; and when their child was born, embraced her, and set out again upon his travels.

This rather dry tale has been used by Tagore in much the same way as Shakespeare used the older plays and stories upon which he founded his dramas: that is, as a point of departure rather than as a plot. Little of it survives in his poem, beyond the names of the characters and the Amazonian character of Chitra herself. She appears before us; asking of Madana, God of Love, and Vasanta, God of the Seasons, the gift of those feminine graces which her manly education has taken away. Upon one of her hunting excursions she has seen Arjuna, who is living as a hermit in the forest; she loves him and desires his love. When first he saw her, he thought her a boy. She returned to him in a woman's dress, and he rejected her.

"I hated my strong, lithe arm, scored by drawing the bow string O love, god love, thou hast laid low in the dust the vain pride of my manlike strength; and all my man's training lies crushed under thy feet Now teach me thy lessons; give me the power of the weak, and the weapon of the unarmed hand"

The gods grant her prayer, and give to her for a year the gift of perfect beauty from "the inexhaustible stores of the spring." Thus disguised, Chitra

appears to Arjuna, a flower-like creature, nameless and mysterious as the fairy love in some Celtic folk-tale; conquers without difficulty his senses, and even for a time holds his heart. But the act that he loves, not her reality but her borrowed beauty, poisons for her even the first ecstasy of passion. She repents of her deception, and asks the gods to take back their boon. The wise Vasanta advises patience: love, he says, obeys the seasonal law. Arjuna now desires the flower of Chitra's beauty; but the time will come when he longs for the "abiding fruitful truth" of her real self.

We watch the gradual exhaustion of Arjuna's first rapture, the returning tide of his interest in that actual life, that world of duty and endeavour, with which the elusive loveliness of Chitra – made of "the things of the clouds, the dance of the waves, the smell of the flowers" – has no relation.

"Give me something to clasp, something that can last longer than pleasure, that can endure even through suffering," he cries at last. and turns from his fairy love to dream of the open-air, hunting, active life, "the rude and healthy touch of the world" – above all, of the princess Chitra, whom men praise as "a man in valour, a woman in tenderness"

The year passes, and Vasanta's prophecy is fulfilled. Illusion has prepared Arjuna for reality; for the exquisite flower, he now demands the fruit: "I grope for that ultimate you, that bare simplicity of truth." In the last scene, Chitra – her magical beauty gone – appears before him once more in her true form, "straight and strong as a daring heart," like a noble boy in her male dress; and says to him, in the most beautiful and significant passage of this beautiful play:

"I brought from the garden of heaven flowers of incomparable beauty with which to worship you, god of my heart I am not beautifully perfect as the flowers with which I worshipped I have many flaws and blemishes I am a traveller in the great world-path, my garments are dirty, and my feet are bleeding with thorns Where should I achieve flower-beauty, the unsullied loveliness of a moment's life? The gift that I proudly bring you is the heart of a woman Here have all pains and joys gathered, the hopes, and fears, and shames of a daughter of the dust.

here love springs up struggling toward immortal life. Herein lies an imperfection which is yet Nobel and grand. if the flower-service is finished, my master, accept this as your servant for the days to come."

And Arjuna, his education completed, replies to her:

"Beloved my life is full."

We have said little of the minor beauties of "Chitra," the innumerable touches by which its romantic atmosphere is evoked, the many felicities of expression. These are perhaps, somewhat obscured by the translation, which does not appear to be Mr. Tagore's own work, and falls short to lofty standard which he set in "Gitanjali." They are nevertheless sufficiently apparent to make it clear that their author is, above all things, a great poet, possessing the poet's imagination in a high degree; and that his genius is the genius of the true creator of beauty, not merely of the ethical or religious teacher deliberately giving to his doctrine a poetic form.

24 January, 1914

## THE OUTLOOK

p114(W)

### THE NOBEL PRIZE

THE GARDENER. By Rabindranath Tagore. Translated by the Author from the original Bengali. London Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net

This is not a book that can be written about - it is a book merely to be read. There are eighty-five poems, and the author tells us in a note that they were mostly written much earlier than the religious poems in his *Gitanjali*. The title page is fronted with a portrait of the author at the age of sixteen. The poems in this book are love poems. "This love between you and me is simple as a song" is the refrain of one of the poems, and it might be set in the front of them all. They have not poignancy so much as an absolute clearness of vision, as of objects seen through the water

of a stream. When a scene is conjured, it has the newly washed brilliancy that the landscape has sometimes after rain. Sometimes the words are in the mouth of a speaker: "I was one among many women busy with the obscure daily tasks of the household. Why did you single me out and bring me away from the cool shelter of our common life?" Sometimes there is a narrative opening: "The workman and his wife from the west country are busy digging to make bricks for the kiln. Their little daughter goes to the landing-place by the river; there she has no end of scouring and scrubbing of pots and pans." The poem beginning "When the two sisters go to fetch water" will serve to illustrate the poet's skill to inform, with its utilisation of only three line-endings, "fetch water," "this spot," and "they smile." The lyric beginning "Why do you whisper so faintly in my ears, O Death, my Death?" is a lovely lyric. For the true spirit of lyric, a keen memory perfectly embalmed in tranquil words, one might point to "I remember a day in my childhood I floated a paper boat in the ditch."

Mr. Tagore's prose lyrics are poems as the English Psalms are poems. We may give here the one poem, not without a turn of quaintness that is characteristic, in which the poet speaks of his art:

In the world's audience hall, the simple blade of grass sits on the same carpet with the sunbeam and the stars of midnight.

Thus my songs share their seats in the heart of the world with the music of the clouds and forests

But, you man of riches, your wealth has no part in the simple grandeur of the sun's glad gold and the mellow gleam of the musing moon.

The blessings of the all-embracing sky is not shed upon it.

And when death appears, it pales and withers and crumbles into dust

The book is not likely to need recommendation to the admirers of the poet, to whom the Nobel prize for literature has been awarded.

30 January, 1914

## **PUBLIC OPINION**

p138(W)

### **AN M.P. IN MR. TAGORE'S SCHOOL. HOW THE BENGALI POET AND NOBEL PRIZE WINNER EDUCATES HIS BOYS IN THE ABODE OF PEACE - OFFICIAL ATTEMPTS TO SUPPRESS THE SCHOOL.**

MR. R. RAMSAY MacDONALD, M.P., has again returned from India, and describes in the Chronicle his interesting visit to the school of the Nobel prize-winner and Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who was so recently in England, and whose books are now having a very large sale.

#### **A Dawdling Train**

"On my way from Delhi to Calcutta I spent a day at the Santiniketan (literally 'the abode of peace'), near Bolpur, where Rabindranath Tagore has his school," writes Mr. MacDonald.

"Bolpur is on a side line upon which trains linger long and where every station has its kaleidoscopic crown of bustling, chattering, bright-coloured humanity. It runs through a flat plain broken by paddy fields and clumps of palm trees. It was harvest-time, and, as we dawdled along, there was plenty of time to watch the ingathering of the rice. In nearly every field there were little black things busy, some with the sickle, some tying the cut straw into bundles. It was mid-afternoon when I started the 40 miles journey on the loop-line, but night had fallen and fires were gleaming from the grass huts before Bolpur was reached. Out for over a mile through the village and into the plain I was driven, and found night's abode in a large house hidden amongst trees, the home of Rabindranath Tagore.

#### **The Rest of My Heart**

"Some half-century ago Maharsi Devendranath, the Poet's father, finding that an unbroken attention to the affairs of the world was not good for the soul, sought some secluded spot where he might occasionally retire for solitary meditation, and under two chatim trees which grow on the

plain he found it. There he could sit under the shade with nothing but the vast flat of untilled land, green after the rains but a brick-dust desert under the sun, in front of him, and think of Him who, according to the carving on the marble seat and tablet which now mark the spot, "is indeed the rest of my heart, the peace of my mind and the joy of my soul." There he built an "asram," a house where the devout might dwell whilst on devotional mission, and a kind of a chapel where for about 40 years prayers were said daily. But no one went there except the Tagores, and it looked as though the place, like so many similar places in India, was to fall into decay with him who built and endowed it.

#### **The House of the Devout**

"But the son, Rabindranath, desired otherwise. A garden of trees had grown up round the house. The area of shaded place had extended, and here he proposed to found a school. Thus, since 1901, the voices of children have broken the solitude of the waste. Dormitories thatched with grass were built and were filled. Masters' houses appeared in sheltered places and red and purple creepers covered them. The waste became playing fields. When I was there about 190 boys and 20 masters were in the settlement.

"It is difficult to explain the feelings which possess one who goes to such institutions. They have nothing to do with Government; their staff is not official; their system is not an enforced mechanical routine. At the Santiniketan they complained that when their boys reached the University matriculation standard, educational methods had to be adopted which the teachers regretted. These schools are native to the soil like the trees which grow out of it. They are therefore not incongruous, and a lack of incongruity must surely be a test imposed upon every national system of education

#### **India Leans Upon Herself**

"Here India leans upon herself and issues from herself. There is no attempt made to impose something foreign, to uproot or to force; no necessity to guard alien methods by alien instructors. The

### Poetry.

#### HAPPINESS.

THE early autumn day is cloudless.  
 The river is full to the brim, washing the naked roots  
 of the tottering tree by the ford.  
 The long narrow path, like the thirsty tongue of the  
 village, dips down into the stream.  
 The babbling of the water mingles with the laughing  
 gossip of the women at their bath.  
 The fisherman, weaving his net, sits in his boat tied to  
 a bamboo pole, and the naked boy plunges into the  
 water with loud shouts.  
 My heart is full, and I feel that happiness is simple, like  
 a meadow flower.  
 We grasp it with a cruel eagerness, and crush it; we jump  
 beyond it in our mad pursuit, and miss it for ever.  
 I look around me and see the silent sky and the flowing  
 water, and feel that happiness is spread abroad as  
 simply as a smile on a child's face.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

### Poetry.

#### FULFILMENT.

No; it is not yours to open buds into blossoms.  
 Shake the bud, strike it; it is beyond your power to make  
 it blossom.  
 Your touch soils it, you tear its petals to pieces, and strew  
 it on the dust.  
 But no colors appear, and no perfume.  
 Ah! it is not for you to open the bud into a blossom.  
 He who can open the bud into a blossom does it so simply.  
 He gives it a glance of his eyes, and the life sap stirs  
 through its veins, for he who can make the bud  
 blossom does it so simply.  
 At his breath the flower spreads its wings and flutters  
 in the wind.  
 Colors flush out like heart-longings, the perfume betrays  
 sweet secrets.  
 He who can open the bud does it so simply.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

teachers are Indian, Indian in their thoughts, in their habits, in their sympathies, in their dress. Government aid has been refused because the conditions under which it would be given could not be acceptable. "They would have made my boys sit on benches," said Mr. Tagore with a quiet smile, "whereas I think it far better that they should sit on mats under the trees." Hence, as with the Gurukula at Hondwar, so with this school, it has been frowned upon; it has been put on the police black list; attempts have been made to suppress it; it has been the subject of threatening official circulars issued to parents. The persecution has only endeared it to its founder. It has been kept going at the cost of much sacrifice. Into its exchequer Mr. Tagore has put not only the Nobel Prize, but the royalties on his books.

### Chanting Hymns at Dawn

"I awoke early in the morning whilst the dawn was still but a tinge of light in the darkness. Outside there was sweet singing, and I was told that every morning the school choir went round the gardens chanting hymns. The day is closed in the same way. For a quarter of an hour in the morning and in the evening the boys sit in meditation. Twice a week they assemble in the chapel for common worship and Rabindranath speaks to them and exhorts them to good living. They do all their own housework even to their washing, and their clothes are spotless. There used to be a manager, but they have recently dispensed with his services and elect from themselves a committee to do his work. One of the results is that in the purchase of rice alone a saving of a hundred rupees a month is being made. This practice of self-government runs throughout the school.

The masters elect from amongst themselves a head who acts for a year, but who may be re-elected. The present principal, Mr. Roy, has been chosen three times. Discipline is enforced and punishments meted out by captains and courts of school justice elected every month by the boys. There are small causes and appellate courts created in this way, and they decide at least once a fortnight all cases which arise in the life of the classes and the playground."

### Alive with the Life of India

"For under the trees I had seen an interesting sight. The villages around are inhabited by the aboriginal Santals, and the boys of the school go out sometimes with football or bat and begin a game. When a crowd has gathered the game is stopped and the players talk of knowledge to the villagers. From this an evening class is formed and the Santiniketan boys go out and teach in it. The day I was there about a dozen of these children had come in and were being taught under a tree. They were lively imps with wide interested eyes and so full of life that they could not keep still. They were being shown the delights of the stereoscope and were being taught to describe accurately what they saw. Two boys were looking after them. It was their tribute to India and their service to the reincarnated motherland to which all their youthful enthusiasm was devoted "

### A Glimpse of Another World

"I left them sitting class by class on their little mats under the "*chatim*" trees, their books by their side, and their teachers in their midst. They smiled and chatted as I passed. Everything was peaceful, natural, happy. And I went away into another world where worthy and well-meaning graduates from Oxford and Cambridge were toiling and perspiring like blacksmiths with heavy hammers to beat and bend the Indian mind into strange forms on strange anvils, and where there is unhappiness and sadness of heart - timorous whispers instead of laughter, doubt instead of hope.

7 February, 1914

**THE DAILY CITIZEN**

p4c5:D)

### Section: LONDON CHAT

The name and fame of Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, are getting around among people who think of reading his books but are still rather vague about him. A well-known London library (so the Book Monthly tells me) has had

various requests which suggest as much from intelligent subscribers. "Please send me," ran one letter, "a copy of the Jewish writer's book 'Gitanjali: his name is Tagore, I think.'" The second request was, "have you got that Russian Tagore's latest volume?" and a third was to the effect, "I would like a copy, please, of that Arab poet's new volume of songs."

If Mr. Tagore hears of these things, they will probably amuse him, for he has a quiet sense of humour, a sense so quiet that it is almost indifferent.

I had an interesting talk the other day with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald about Rabindranath and the other members of the Tagore family. Mr. MacDonald has known them all for many years, and just before returning home recently he paid a visit to the poet's school, and spent a most interesting time.

It is pleasing to learn that Rabindranath has devoted the proceeds of the Nobel Prize for Literature to the better equipment of his school, in which he is absorbed. Although enjoying something of a first vogue in England, Tagore's poetry was by no means unknown in India; and as a matter of fact the books of his poems which are now being so eagerly bought here are just reprinted translations which have long been in circulation in India.

7 February, 1914

THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

p6c2(DE)

### POETS FROM AFAR

Reviewed by WALTER DE LA MARE

**"Through the Torii" by Yone Noguchi (Elkin Mathews) 5s. net. "Chitra" by Rabindranath Tagore. (Published by the India Society at the Chiswick Press.) "Lyrics from the Chinese." By Helen Waddell. (Constable.) 2s. 6d. net.**

The East will never be West - and John Bull reminds himself again and again of the fact, as he gazes a little wistfully over his multitudinous Em-

pire. But if there is one thing that these three books whisper, insinuate, insist on, it is the assurance that deep down in heart and mind all mankind is preternaturally human, and that poetry, the language of the imagination, is the Volapuk and Esperanto.

\* \* \*

"Knowing its sad side for anything," says Mr. Noguchi, concerning Ugliness, "is always beautiful; that, only that, makes the ugliness reveal a far better light than beauty itself; its triumph is more staying." It is this reflection that is the "idea" of Rabindranath Tagore's lyrical drama, "Chitra." This little play was written twenty-five years ago, and must be nearly contemporary with his most impulsive and lyrical work, "The Gardener." Chitra, a princess of a line of kings, whom destiny has doomed to have but one child each, comes in her huntsman's dress, in all her boyish uncouthness, to entreat a boon of madana, the god of love, and of Vasanta, the god of the changing seasons - of Eternal Youth. They grant it; that for one whole year she shall be clothed in irresistibly seductive loveliness. So armed, so masked - her arrows and breviaries flung aside - she at once captivates the heart of Arjuna, a prince of warrior caste who, having vowed celibacy, lives in the solitude of a forest. But perfect beauty begins at length to cloy. Wonderful tales Arjuna hears of the prowess and endurance of the princess Chitra. And once desperate alone to be loved if only for her beauty, she now hungers for the enchanted roses that shall restore her to herself. With what consummation Mr. Tagore's reader will discover. A phrase, here and there, in Mr. Tagore's prose is destructive of illusion: "I have never learned Cupid's archery, the play of eyes"; "She bared her bosom and looked at her arms, so flawlessly modelled, and instinct with an exquisite caress." But these are rare. And "Chitra" is only one more revelation of Mr. Tagore's astonishing mastery of English. To win not only idiom, fluency, cadence, but also atmosphere in an alien tongue is neither the least nor, for us, the least fortunate, of this poet's achievements. How many English writers, one may speculate, could return so grave and real a compliment.

13 February, 1914

**THE BAPTIST TIMES AND FREEMAN**

p122(W)

**Rabindranath Tagore**

Towards the close of November last a deputation of over five hundred persons was conducted along an avenue festooned with mango and lotus leaves and garlanded with flowers, to Santiniketan, "the Home of Peace," in Bolepur, India, in order to congratulate its owner on receiving the Nobel prize for literature. The visitors were welcomed by a figure of unusual grace and beauty, having quiet, meditative eyes and flowing hair, and picturesquely robed. An address was then presented, printed on the fine silk, which the poet received with simple dignity, remarking that, while he thanked the deputation for their words, he never longed for fame, but desired rather to speak a message to the heart.

Who was this man? He was Rabindranath Tagore, a new mystical writer, who has expressed the soul of the East for us in undying verse. Already his songs are sung by wayfarers throughout India, wherever the Bengali tongue is spoken, from Burmah to Bombay. At Calcutta, on one occasion, when it was known that he was to read divine service in a church of the Brahma Somaj, the streets were rendered all by impassable, because of the press of people who thronged to see him. The present age of literature has but one name given to it in India. It is the epoch of Rabindranath Tagore.

It says much for the essentially religious character of the Hindu people that, while we in the West are humming Tango tunes and the latest pantomime ditty, the natives of India should take to their heart of hearts these intensely spiritual songs. The significant thing is that Tagore is no ascetic, like the traditional yogi of the past. He does not affect to withdraw his attention from the fleeting illusions of the senses, in order to plunge into the abyss of a bottomless inner self. On the contrary, he has a true elemental love for all the primal beauties of earth and sea and sky, and like a second St. Francis exults in the cascades of joy that flood his heart in the presence of Nature.

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.

Though ever purest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim

No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight

Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!

The butterflies spread their sails on the sea of light

Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaven's river has drowned its banks and the flood of joy is abroad

Equally remarkable in Tagore is his love of humanity, especially as it shows itself in winsome and unspoiled natures. Readers of *The Crescent Moon* and *Gitanjali* are surprised by depths of insight into the child-heart which even Blake and Stevenson have never fathomed. Sometimes his sayings are very poignant in their delicate suggestiveness:

The sweet, soft freshness that blooms on baby's limbs - does anybody know where it was hidden so long? Yes, when the mother was a young girl it lay pervading her heart in tender and silent mystery of love - the sweet, soft freshness that has bloomed on baby's limbs

There is haunting beauty, too, in some of the metaphors which he employs to illustrate this thought.

Let the cloud of grace bend low from above, like the tearful look of the mother in the day of the father's wrath

It is in his direct communings with the Eternal however, that the exquisite qualities of this writer's poetry are seen at their best. Tagore uses many terms of endearment to describe God, such as Poet, Darling, Lover, besides Friend and Father. This alone is remarkable, since Hindu thought, properly speaking, refuses personality to God, and can only designate the Infinite as I. To Tagore, the Heavenly Lover is ever hovering near, waiting to elude all watchers and come in upon us when we last expect Him. Our eager pursuit misses Him; then, lo, He comes, with a harp of joy in his hands to ease our sadness! And the secret of the Lord, when it is found, speaks in all things else for ever afterwards.

Tagore loves especially to dwell on the lowliness of the Eternal. He hides Himself in the dust beneath our tread, and no man can stoop far enough to do obeisance at His blessed feet. The poet's one desire is to present himself as a reed, simple and straight and fair, so that he may be played upon by God, and O the rapture when he sings, and God himself is willing to lend an ear! The marvel of marvels is that God should make Himself beautiful in order to captivate the heart of one poor creature. What can he do but wait on such a God continually, yet with the quaking of a great fear, lest what he asks in prayer should be fully granted! God's answer to prayer is often a hard but pitiful refusal, so that we may be made worthy of his great and *simple* gifts. All that the poet asks for is that the last remnants of his weakness may be offered up to God.

Let only that little be left of me, whereby I may  
name thee my all

Let only that little of my fetters be left whereby  
I am bound with thy will, and the purpose is carried  
out in my life - and that is the fetter of thy love

There are no stanzas more beautiful than those which describe the bliss and infinity of death. Death to our poet is a going to the Bridegroom, and all life is the weaving of His wedding garland. It may indeed be a wrench to us when we are called upon to part with this dear and nourishing earth. So also is it a wrench for the child when it is taken from the comforting right breast of its darling mother. What then? Straightaway, the left breast receives it, and the child is comforted again.

It is well that we of the West who send missionaries to the East should also be willing to learn what Indian has to teach us. Even bustling Baptist pastors may have something to gain by sitting at the feet of a man who spends two hours daily in quiet reverie upon God. Tagore is a member of the Brahma Samaj, and we turn to his poems eagerly to see whether they show the influence of distinctively Christian ideas. One rises with the feeling that they are there, but suggested rather than expressed. The phraseology of Western theology is wholly absent, and there is no mention of Christ, nor any indication that His Lordship or Saviourhood has been apprehended. Yet hints are not wanting

that the light that lighteth every man coming into the world has gleamed with exceeding brightness in this sensitive poetic heart. Some of the underlying Christian truths which these poems certainly suggest come to us with the more arresting beauty because they have passed through a mind and a civilisation so different from our own.

The poems of Rabindranath Tagore are a quick, natural gift of emotion which makes our Western life of the feelings seem crude and poor, and a little value by comparison.

"All this is pure fallacy," the reader may object; "you mistake a poet's picture of life for life itself. The delicacy is in Tagore, and not in his countrymen." The same question occurred to us at every page. But, in the first place, Tagore is not an isolated mind which made itself. He is a product of Indian civilisation. In the second place, poets are not given overmuch, when they turn to real life to painting it in colours of unreal beauty. They commonly ask so much from the world that they find the real ugly and unsatisfying. From Shelley to Rupert Brooke, there is hardly one modern English poet who would have painted English men and women in such colours, if he had written prose tales. Wordsworth alone might have done it, and then only for peasants. Moreover, there are in two or three of these tales signs that Tagore can adopt a shrewdly humorous attitude towards life. His gentle satire at the expense of a Hindoo magnate who licked the boots of English officials has a sense for the weaknesses of men, without a touch of cynicism, which reminds us of Daudet. The satire on the island of cards is also the work of a man by no means disposed to idealize reality unduly. We incline to think that the real discovery of India may come from such work as this. There are more novels and tales of this quality in the Indian vernaculars, the translation of them would be the greatest of all steps towards a comprehension by the West of the East. An enlightened government would subsidize a publisher to do it - but we can hardly suppose that a subsidy would be needed. The book is so fresh, so living, and so attractive that even without the author's great reputation it would have stood out in any list of fiction.

We have left ourselves little space in which to speak of the new volume of Tagore's poems. They have all the customary grace and spiritual insight. They impressed as we confess, less than his first volume, for

his manner seems to become slighter and more indefinite, and the likeness of valuable for their performance, but still more valuable for the promise they afford of a coming dawn. We have been waiting anxiously for some indication of the effect of Christian ideas on a truly representative Hindu mind. Here surely, is the person we have been longing for - one sent before the chariot of Lord to make his paths straight. And when we remember that this poet's every word is eagerly caught up by waiting millions, may we not venture to assert that the new, the Christian India, is already at the door?

13 February, 1914

### THE IRISH TIMES

p6c3(D)

#### INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

MR. Rabindranath Tagore is bringing the spirit of the Orient very close to us. A great Indian sage and poet, he is almost the first of the Indian thinkers to publish his works in the English language. His first volume of poems, "Prayer Offerings" and his later volume of lyrics of love and life called "The Gardener," were important additions to our mystical literature. They revealed a poet whose spiritual influence, while fresh and beautiful, was, for an Oriental strangely in touch with Western thought and needs. The rapidity with which his books have followed one another would almost lead one to fear a falling off in quality, but when one reflects that the rapidity of their publication does not represent the rate at which they were written the reason for their sustained excellence is seen. Instead of being mere transient thoughts, written to hold the popularity gained by this year's Nobel Prize winner's earlier works, they are really the fruits of a lifetime of study, reflection and asceticism.

This is apparent from Mr. Tagore's two latest volumes now before us. In "Sadhana, the Realisation of Life," he discusses the relation of the individual to the universe, and gives Western readers an opportunity of coming in touch with the ancient spirit of India as revealed in her sacred texts and manifested in her life of to-day. Basing his discourses on the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings

of Buddha, Mr. Tagore expounds the ancient doctrines of the Rishis, or wise men of India, handed down by tradition and otherwise. He distinguishes between the foundations of Occidental and Oriental philosophy, and shows that Western thinkers, regarding man as separate from the rest of creation, teach him, by filling his mind with as many ideas as possible, to subdue Nature; while the Eastern sages, believing man to be at one with Nature, seek to destroy all barriers of thought and knowledge which would prevent him from surrendering his ego, and merging in the cosmic soul of the great all. The West seeks to develop, while the East seeks to merge, individually. The doctrine of the Rishis, founded on the belief that all creation has one universal soul in Brahma, explains the curious telepathic, hypnotic, and other powers which many of them are said to possess. It is obvious that, if the consciousness of one is the consciousness of all, anyone who, like a Rishi, attains to Bodhi, or the state of universal consciousness, must be able to become aware of what is in the minds of others.

The poems contained in "the Crescent Moon" relate exclusively to children, and, while some of them are very beautiful, chiefly on account of their simplicity of style and delicacy of imagery, they fall very far short of the spiritual feeling and passion which the earlier poems convey. This is, however, to judge them by the very high standard which we feel disposed to apply to the winner of the Nobel Prize.

The book has some typical illustrations in colour by Indian Artists

13 February, 1914

### THE FRIEND

p109(W)

#### Reviews

#### The Gospel of Joy\*

By Herbert G. Wood, M.A.

It is curious to notice how much of recent poetic thought in the West has turned on the antagonism

\*Sadhana The Realisation of Life By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan & Co 5s net.)

between man and nature. Tennyson's references to nature sending evil dreams at strife with God, or shrieking with ravine against our creed, were felt to be profoundly true by a generation which had, indeed, no special quarrel with nature, for they were comfortable enough, but which based the thought of nature on one particular range of scientific observation. Tennyson is not alone; Henley found himself in the full clutch of circumstance, and under the bludgeoning of chance. Maeterlinck assures us that we are embosomed in injustice, and William Watson expanding Tennyson's thought, regrets that Heaven does not vouchsafe some sign:

"That through all nature's frame  
Boundless assent benign  
is everywhere her aim "

It is not surprising that such a tendency has led to the neglect of Wordsworth, whose discovery of moral good in nature must be regarded as pure subjectivism; and it is not surprising, on the other hand, to find that Wordsworth at once attracted a typical Hindu, such as Vivekananda. In the first of his lectures, Tagore explains to us why the Indian mind feels that one-sidedness of the pessimistic view of nature, which still dominates us in the West. He points out that Indian thought has always been associated with the country and the forests. In the West, we are always talking about conquering nature, as if she were our foe and not our mother; and Tagore would trace our Western attitude in part to our economic activities, and still more the fact that our civilisation is born and bred in cities; it begins and is sustained in a kind of divorce from nature. To do justice to the Western point of view, we should have to add the blinding effect of the discoveries of Darwin, and the moral difficulty of certain features of the struggle for existence. But that the common witness of much recent poetry on the subject of nature is tainted with artificiality, and springs from a distorted vision, cannot very well be doubted.

No one is better fitted than Tagore himself to correct the injustice which we in the West inflict upon nature. It is refreshing to be reminded that "this world is our compeer," and to meet a man who has the courage to believe and assert that "from

joy does spring all this creation, by joy is it maintained, towards joy does it progress, and into joy does it enter."

Tagore's unfolding of his central poetic perception will appeal the more to Western readers, - because, unlike many Hindus, he appreciates the realisation of life in action. In a previous article I expressed a doubt as to Tagore's grasp of the dramatic character of History. Sadhana removes that doubt in so far as in it Tagore asserts most empathetically the worth of this "grand self-expression of humanity in action," "this eternal effort of man through depths of sorrow, through heights of gladness, through innumerable impediments, within and without, to win victory for his powers." Moreover, Tagore perceives that it is not true to say that man is active only on compulsion and under the spur of necessity. At the heart of work is the joy of creation. "This joy of life, this joy of work in man is absolutely true. It is no use saying that it is a delusion of ours."

We have not the space to convey the reader the thought of Tagore on the mystery of individuality, on the realisation of one's true self in love, and on the significance of beauty. I cannot forbear making one quotation, in which he protests against the tyranny of the scientific standpoint in negating our appreciation of natural beauty.

"Science here warns us that we are mistaken, that the purpose of a flower is nothing but what is outwardly manifested, and that the relation of beauty and sweetness, which we think it bears to us, is all our own making, gratuitous, and imaginary.

"But our heart replies that we are not in the least mistaken. In the sphere of nature the flower carries with it a certificate which recommends it as having immense capacity for doing useful work, but it brings an altogether different letter of introduction when it knocks at the door of our hearts. Beauty becomes its only qualification... That the flower has got its being in the unbroken chain of causation, is true beyond doubt. But that is an outer truth; the inner truth is, verily from the everlasting joy do all objects have their birth."

What, then, of pain and death? Are they to be ignored? Or are they to be treated as illusory? Tagore's answer cannot fairly be summarised, but

he perceives that death and decay do but safeguard the immortal youth that stands in the very core of the world's heart, like St. Frances, he is almost in love with sister death. It is high doctrine, but not un-Christian. To sum up, in *Sadhana* the reader will find the great problems of life treated with a depth and originality of poetic insight which are rare, and which equip Tagore to save us from the unreflective acceptance of one-sided views of nature, that ignore her testimony to joy and love.

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14 February, 1914

**THE SPECTATOR**

p266-267(W)

### **THE NEO-HINDUISM OF BENGAL\***

The British Empire in India has often been compared with the Roman Empire. There are obvious points of resemblance. There is, however, an important difference, and one that may easily be overlooked. It is the pride of the British administration that it has been scrupulously tolerant and impartial in religious matters. It has never helped or hindered Christian missions. Its laws provide absolute equality for all creeds, and wilful insult to any man's religion, be he Hindu or Buddhist, Moslem or Christian, is severely punished. But the Roman administrator could do more. He belonged to an age in which scientific accuracy of statement was not possible. He was contented with fictions and plausibilities, legal and other, which no longer satisfy Western ideas of veracity. As a recent French historian puts it, "the ancient gods were not hostile to one another, as in later times the God of Saint Martin was necessarily hostile to Mercury and Jupiter. In that age, truth consisted not in the adoration of one single God, but in the terror of all the gods. The Roman was generous in his offerings to Apollo of Delphi; the Gauls of Provence worshipped the deities of the Greek colony at Massilia; the Emperor Augustus built a temple to the Ligurian god of the chill Mistral wind". So Julius Caesar gladly recognised the Gaulish Belenus as the counterpart

of Apollo, and believed, or professed to believe, that Mercury, Minerva, and Jupiter were worshipped beyond the Alps under uncouth local names. English administrators in India were prepared to tolerate local beliefs. What the early Anglo-Indians thought of the cruder Hindu doctrines may be sufficiently gathered from Macaulay's famous speech on the Gates of Somnauth. They could tolerate "heathen" superstitions. But far from identifying them with their own religion, they held that Hindu ethics were the very antipodes of those of civilised Christian nations. Let it be remembered that this view of Hinduism applied with special force to the Hinduism of Bengal. Here it was that Tantric and other vicious degradations of Vedic polytheism had their origin. Here, within the memory of the fathers of men still living, a district was annexed from its native rulers because human sacrifices to a bloody goddess were still practised. Let it not be supposed that such crude and savage superstitions are wholly obsolete even in modern Bengal. Readers of Mr. H. A. D. Phillip's translation of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel, *Kopal-Kundala*, will remember the thrilling description of the cannibal Kopalik in one of the opening chapters. [Trubner and Co. 1885]

Yet Bengal has a literature dating from the fourteenth century, and some Bengali authors, long before the recent vogue of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore's poetry, had won the praise of the few Europeans who had read them. E. B. Cowell translated the *Chandi* of Mukunda Ram, and asserted that the poet was a Bengali Crabbe. When English education taught Bengal the art of writing prose, there was a remarkable outburst of literary energy, both in verse and in prose. It must be admitted at once that most of this new literature was singularly devoid of moral or ethical offence. There was an astonishing assimilation of Western ideas, and it was not for nothing that the earliest printing presses in Bengal were in the hands of Christian missionaries. British administrators could not follow the example of Julius Caesar, or identify Krishna with Christ as he identified Belenus with Apollo. But there was no reason why the quick and acute intelligence of Bengal should not adopt Christian ethics, and discover that they were implicitly contained in their own Scriptures, and especially in the Vedas and Upanishads. If it is to Bengal that Hinduism

\* *Sadhana*: the Realisation of life. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. [5s. net.]

owes the Tantric abominations, it was Bengal that arose the Brahmo Somaj, due primarily to the religious genius of Ram Mohan Roy, who discerned that the ideas of his Unitarian English friends could be easily expressed in Hindu phraseology. The second founder of the Somaj was the Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, a man universally esteemed for his learning and piety. His son, as we are told in the preface to *Sadhana*, is the now famous winner of the Nobel Prize. "The writer", he tells us, "has been brought up in a family where texts of the Upanishads are used in daily worship: and he has had before him the example of his father, who lived his long life in the closest communion with God, while not neglecting his duties to the world, or allowing his keen interest in all human affairs to suffer any abatement". He was brought up, that is, in that purified Neo-Hinduism which resulted from the contact with European life and Christian teaching.

Mr. Tagore does not explicitly or implicitly acknowledge the debt which Bengal owed to Christian teaching and example is perhaps not surprising. If Ram Mohan Roy diligently read the Bible, his successors have sought solace and inspiration in the moral teaching of the Upanishads. The result has been that, though many members of the Brahmo Somaj abjure caste and other customs once held necessary to membership of the Hindu community, they nevertheless remain in communion with the humbler Hindus who adhere to the old primitive beliefs. The Hinduism of Bengal still provides an unbroken chain which leads from the highly rationalized Hinduism represented in Mr. Tagore's essays down to the animistic beliefs and customs professed by castes and tribes as yet little above primitive savagery. In the Neo-Hinduism of educated Bengal we have the ethics of Western civilization expressed, as loyal patriotism requires, in the time-honoured phraseology of ancient Hindu philosophers. How easily the theoretical ethical teaching of these can be applied to modern problems may be learned from the use Schopenhauer made of Anquetil du Perron's imperfect version of the Upanishads. From the Indian point of view, the Upanishads have this advantage over the Bible, that they enable a Neo-Hindu to write of "God", when he means the Pan-Theos. A Hindu he remains, but he can

use the terminology of Christian philosophy without putting a violent strain on the connotation of English words. Read from this point of view, Mr. Tagore's verses and essays have remarkable significance and interest. In his grandfather's time, the Bengali Hindu was compelled to speak apologetically of the current beliefs of his province. In Maharshi Devendranath Tagore's time, the New Hinduism was still somewhat suspect among orthodox Hindus, and many simple souls regarded the Brahmo Somaj as a heretical innovation. Now, in our own time, Mr. Tagore speaks in the name of all Indian Hindus, and when he lands in India is garlanded and acclaimed by men and women who nevertheless cling to the ancient beliefs. Hinduism has always been tolerant of new doctrines, and can assimilate them as Caesar assimilated Belenus. Finally, we have Mr. Tagore employing his remarkable literary talents in preaching borrowed ethics to Europe as a thing characteristically Indian, and yet fitted to take an equal place by the side of the loftiest and purest doctrine of Christian teachers.

The New Hinduism is, of course, presented to Christian readers in a deftly attractive form. We have not left ourselves space to analyse Mr. Tagore's teaching, but a single passage taken at random may serve as an example of his method. He defends the pantheistic ideas, and says: "That text of our everyday meditation is the Gayatri, a verse which is considered to be the epitome of all the Vedas. By its help we try to realize the essential unity of the world with the conscious soul of man," &c., &c. It is not likely that many of his European admirers have read the Gayatri. Let us quote Colebrooke's translation of this famous prayer. "Earth, sky, heaven. Let us meditate on (these, and on) the most excellent light and power of that generous, sportier, and resplendent sun, (praying that) it may guide our intellects". Even in an English version, we can feel the picturesqueness and literary beauty of this famous invocation. Julius Caesar might well have welcomed it as a recognition of the sportive splendour of the Apollo who chased Daphne. But that people who profess and call themselves Christians should find solace and delight in Neo-Hindu speculations is surprising. That such a mental attitude is possible perhaps shows to what an extent Christian ethics have been ab-

sorbed and utilized by modern Hindus. But it should give us pause to reflect that Hindus, not unnaturally, deny the debt they owe to Christian teaching, and that among the professors of the new ethic are some of the bitterest enemies of British rule in India. Not all of them are outspoken in their opposition to Western influence. But all of them assert, as Mr. Tagore implicitly asserts, that India has nothing to learn from Europe on the spiritual side.

In the sphere of commerce, of administration, of science, it is not easy to deny the supremacy of Western races. The lessons of history are too plain. But in the matter of ethics and religion, it is possible to oppose an eclectic morality to Christian teaching, and given a writer of great literary talent, to express this morality in moving and attractive language. We have no desire to belittle the greatness of Mr. Tagore's performance. It is so great as almost to excuse the facile enthusiasms of his European admirers.

But there is a fatal flaw of insincerity in its most seemingly elevated utterances. It claims to be the unaided product of Vedic inspiration. It veils a hostility and inexcusable ingratitude to Western teaching. These, even from a purely artistic point of view, are grave defects, and must sooner or later affect the thoughtlessly generous applause with which Mr. Tagore's writings have been welcomed by an indolent age which reads too much to read carefully. Let us admit that the Hinduism of to-day no longer deserves Macaulay's blunt condemnation. But let us not forget that the cruder Hinduism of his day still survives, and is accepted as forming part and parcel of the new doctrine. Mr. Tagore's verses have an extraordinary beauty of sensuous appeal, no one who has any feeling for fine literature will deny. But, as Mr. Tagore himself will readily admit, there are things as beautiful (including the Gayatri prayer itself) embedded in the variegated texture of the Hindu Scriptures. They have been the admiration of many generations of Western scholars, and it may be well that Mr. Tagore's eclectic philosophy should show the European vulgar how much of classical charm survives in modern India. Eclectic it is, however, and deliberately oblivious of its debt to Western teaching. With that we have no particular quarrel. But surely it is an element in

Mr. Tagore's talent which has been too generously ignored by his Western disciples.

18 February, 1914

**THE TIMES**

p9c2(D)

### Lord Gladstone on India

**Cape Town Feb. 17**

The Rev. F. C. Andrew [sic], who came specially from India to investigate the condition of the Indians in South Africa, to-day gave a lecture at the City Hall on the Indian poet, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore.

Lord Gladstone, in seconding a motion of vote of thanks to the lecturer, said that the lecture was one to make them think and realize in a fuller degree what India was and what their duties were to a people who were members of the British Empire. He wished more South Africans could go to India, and by so doing rise to a higher appreciation of what the Indians were. They would then think less of India as a country which sent its coolies to the South African coast, and would realize that there was in the personality of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore an intense expression of imaginative national life. He believed that the lecture would do much to induce a feeling which would help to a solution of the troubles which had stood in the way of good relations between India and South Africa.

19 February, 1914

**DAILY DISPATCH**

p4c5(D)

### The Tagore Boom

An outstanding literary event of the war period is the discovery by the British public of the genius of the great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. A leading publisher informs me that Tagore's books are selling in this country like the proverbial hot cakes.

One of them, "Gitanjali," has reached its thirty-seventh thousand, and the total number of his works sold to British readers is rapidly reaching one hundred thousand. The boom is only just beginning, as most of Tagore's writings were unknown here until recently. Before he won the Nobel prize for literature, in 1913, his fame was chiefly confined to India. Now, at the age of fifty-five, after writing for more than thirty years, he is being acclaimed as one of world's eight or ten greatest living poets.

Mr W B Yeats, speaking of one of his books of verse, says that "I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics."

Tagore writes novels and philosophic essays as well as poetry, and translates them from his own Bengali into English. His picturesque personality is well known in London. A man of arresting appearance he has often been seen in the London streets in Oriental robes and turban. He has a long, flowing beard and moustache, a high forehead, flashing eyes, and clear-cut, Tennysonian features.

26 February, 1914

### THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

p15c6(D)

#### Section : EDUCATION : COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

#### A POET'S SCHOOL

The quick-fire, percussion-cap enthusiast for all that is new in literature, the 'prose poems' of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet, and helped to obtain him the Nobel prize for literature, may be interested to learn that he keeps a school. Those other readers, to whom his prose poems seemed to have no particular meaning, or even any particular grace, will be glad to know that he does something useful, being keeping a school. The boys sit on mats under trees. Each morning and evening they parade the school garden, singing hymns.

Twice a day they sit in meditation, seeking Nirvana during a quarter of an hour and a week they assemble for worship and a sermon from Rabindranath Tagore. These items of the curriculum are suited to the climate or the scholars' religion of course, but there are other features about this school which enthusiasts may find suitable for introduction over here. Thus all the housework, and even the washing, is done by the pupils and the masters - let us introduce that pleasing practice at Eton and in the Council school forthwith! The teachers choose the headmaster, who acts as such for one year - how beautifully democratic! The boys elect courts of justice from among themselves, and these courts dispense school justice - what English boy would not shout for that plan?

11 April 1914

### WESTERN DAILY PRESS

p7c5(D)

#### Section: LITERARY AND DRAMATIC NOTES

Some remarkable figures have been reached by Messers Macmillan in the sale of the four translations they have published of works by Rabindranath Tagore. "Gitanjali" is in its twenty-fourth thousand, and selling steadily; "The Gardener" is in its ninth thousand; "The Crescent Moon" in its seventh; and the philosophical volume, entitled: "Sadhana" in its sixth. These would be notable sales for any books of pure literature. In all the circumstances they are probably without parallel.

## The Man from Kabul.

By Rabindranath Tagore.

My little daughter Mini, when she was about five years old, simply could not live without chattering. I really do not believe she ever remained silent for a whole minute in all her young life. Her mother was often annoyed by her ceaseless babble and wished to stop it, but I could never feel that way. It was so contrary to Nature to see Mini quiet that I could not long endure her silence. My talk with her, you may be sure, was always lively enough.

One morning when I was busy on the seventeenth chapter of my new novel, Mini stole quietly into my room, approached my chair, and, putting her little hand into mine, said, "Papa, Ramdajal, our porter, calls a crow a crew! He doesn't know anything, does he?"

Before I could explain the philological difference between the several sounds of the vowels in our language she began to ask other questions.

"Only think, papa," she said. "Bhola says there is an elephant in the clouds, and that he blows water out of his trunk and makes it rain!"

And in the same instant, changing the subject, "Papa, what is the relation of mamma with you?"

"A lawful one, my dear," I managed to reply, with gravity. "Now run and play with Bhola, Mini. I am busy."

Through my study window I could see the street. My little daughter seated herself at my feet near the table and began playing, patting her knees with her hands, and murmuring to herself. I worked away at my seventeenth chapter—the chapter in which Pratap Singh, the hero, seizes Kanchanalatan, the heroine, in his arms and is about to fly with her through the third-story window of the castle—but suddenly Mini left off her play and ran to the window, crying out, "Kabulano! Kabulano!" And in fact, there was a Kabulano passing by in the street below at that minute. He was wearing the broad, loose garments and the huge turban of his native land, Kabul. On his back he bore a large bag and in his hand were some raisin boxes.

I cannot explain what feeling had seized hold of my little daughter, when she saw this man, that she began to call to him loudly.

"Oh, dear!" I thought. "He will, without a doubt, come in, and my seventeenth chapter will never be finished!"

Just at that moment the Kabulano turned around and looked up at the child. But when she saw his face she was beside herself with terror, and, turning, fled to the protection of her mother. She had, apparently, believed that the giant was carrying two or three other children like herself in his great sack. Meanwhile the peddler had entered the house, and he now saluted me smilingly.

Although my hero and heroine were in a very critical situation at that moment, still my first impulse was to cease from my labour and purchase something from the peddler, since he had been called. I therefore bought a few little things, and began to speak with him concerning the Amir, Abd-ur-Rahman, and to talk about the Russians, the English, the boundary dispute.

As he was going away he asked, "But where is the little girl, sir?"

I thought that Mini ought to put away her senseless fear, so I called to her to come in. She obeyed, but she stood very close to my chair, looking curiously at the Kabulano and his bag. He offered to treat her with nuts and raisins, but she would not be tempted, and she only held herself closer to me, with all her doubts and fears increased.

Such was their first meeting.

But one morning not many days afterwards, as I was stepping out of the house, I was greatly surprised to find Mini sitting on a bench near the door, laughing and chattering, with the giant Kabulano at her feet. It doubtless seemed to her that never in all her life had she had such a patient listener as this man—except, of course, her father! Already her apron was full of almonds and raisins, the gift of her visitor.

"Why do you give them to her?" I asked, and, taking a coin from my purse, I put it into his hand. The man accepted it without a word and dropped it into his pocket.

But, alas! when I came home an hour after, I found that my coin had been causing unheard-of confusion, for the Kabulano had given it to Mini, and her mother, catching sight of the bright round silver piece, had seized the little girl, and demanded, "Where did you get that *ekana*?"

Fig. 20 Tagore's story in two consecutive volumes of *The Christian Commonwealth*  
25 February 1914, p383 and 4 March, 1914, p399

"The Kabulan gave it to me," replied Mini, gayly.

"The Kabulan gave it to you?" cried the mother, greatly shocked. "Oh, Mini, how dared you accept it from him?"

It was at that moment I entered the room, and at once I began to shield my daughter from the unhappiness that was threatening her. Then I began to examine into the affair.

This was not the first nor the second time they had met, I discovered. The Kabulan had conquered Mini's first fears through wise gifts of almonds and raisins. Now they were great friends.

They had a number of curious jokes which seemed to give them the greatest pleasure. Sitting near him and looking down upon his gigantic figure, Mini would ripple with laughter, and then begin:

"Oh, Kabulano! Oh, Kabulano! What have you in your great bag?"

Then the Kabulan would reply, with the nasal accent of the mountaineer, "An elephant!"

Really there was little cause for amusement here, but how they both did enjoy that joke! For me there was always something touching in this babbling of the little child with the big, full-grown man.

Now the Kabulan, evidently not wishing to be outdone, would begin on his side:

"Missy, when will you come to your father-in-law?"

The majority of Hindu girls know all about the father-in-law at a very early age. But we were somewhat modern, and we had therefore concealed this subject from our daughter, so that Mini was now a little confused by this question. But, hiding her confusion, she answered spiritedly, "Why, are you intending to go there?"

Now among the Kabulans the expression "At your father-in-law's" has a double significance, as it is there used in a slangy sense for "gaol," the place where they give us such careful attention and entertain us quite free of charge. It was according to that sense that the big, wandering peddler understood my daughter's question.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, shaking his fist at some invisible policeman; "I shall thrash my father-in-law!"

Hearing that, and in her imagination seeing the unhappy beaten relative, Mini exploded with laughter, shriek following shriek, her big, terror-striking friend laughing with her.

It was then autumn—the time of year when the kings of old set out to fight and conquer—and I, though never moving out of my little corner in Calcutta, hugged with complacency the thought of travelling throughout the whole world. Even hearing the mere mention of a foreign land caused my heart to beat more rapidly, and, catching sight of a foreigner in the street, I straightway began to weave a tapestry of dream about the mountains, the valleys, and the forests of his distant home. I visualised his little hut, I considered the free and independent life he led in his far-away, savage country. And it seemed the more clearly these pictures of travel stood out in my spiritual vision, passing and repassing in my mind, the more startling did any proposal of an actual excursion strike upon me—such a vegetative life was I living. In the presence of the Kabulan I was immediately transported into Kabul, at the foot of the treeless mountains, whose narrow gorges wind and twist in and out between their lofty heights. There, in my mind's eye, I saw the trains of camels with their loads of commercial products, directed by turbaned merchants—some of them carried old-style firearms, others carried lances—travelling down into the plains. I could see—but at that moment the mother of Mini interrupted me, beseeching me with tears, "Guard yourself against that man!"

It is too bad that Mini's mother is such a timorous woman. Whenever she hears a noise in the street, or sees men approaching the house, she immediately concludes that they are thieves, or drunkards, or snakes, or tigers, or the malaria, or locusts, or worms, or English seamen. Even after the experience of years she is not able to control her fear. And she was filled with doubt concerning the Kabulan, and she would beg of me that I watch him closely at all times.

I quietly endeavoured to make light of her fear, but she turned and in all seriousness propounded some grave questions to me:

"Are children never kidnapped?"

"Is it not true that slavery exists in Kabul?"

"And is it too much to believe that such a giant might carry off our little girl?"

I replied that, while such a thing was not wholly impossible, it was exceedingly improbable. But she was not satisfied, and her fear continued. Since, however, this fear was so unfounded, it did not seem right to refuse the man permission to enter the house, and, accordingly, the intimacy was not interrupted.

(To be concluded.)

## The Man from Kabul.

By Rabindranath Tagore.

(Continued from last week.)

Once every year, in the middle of January, Rahmud, the Kabulan, was accustomed to return to his own country, and when that time approached he was always very busy, going from house to house, collecting his bills. However, he never failed to find time to come and chat with Mini every day.

Sometimes I was surprised as I would suddenly come upon the tall, loosely clothed man in some corner of a dark room, but when Mini would come running in, laughing and crying out her "Oh, Kabulano! Oh, Kabulano!" and when the two friends, so different in their ages, would seat themselves and begin their customary laughing and joking, I was at once tranquil in mind.

One morning, several days before the date fixed for the departure of the Kabulan, I was in my study correcting proofs. It was chilly weather. The rays of the sun, coming through the window, fell upon my body and were indeed welcome. It was about eight o'clock, and the early promenaders in the street had gone home. Suddenly I heard a racket below. Looking out, I beheld Rahmud, the Kabulan, being led along by two policemen, a great band of curious children following after. There were blood spots on the Kabulan's garments, and one of the policemen was carrying a knife. Hurrying outside, I stopped them and demanded the meaning of the affair.

Partly from one, partly from the other, I learned that a neighbour owed the Kabulan some money for a Rampur shawl, but he had denied that he ever made any such purchase. During the dispute that followed Rahmud had assaulted him.

In a paroxysm of rage the Kabulan was applying every name imaginable to his enemy, when suddenly my daughter ran out upon the veranda with her customary cry, "Oh, Kabulano! Oh, Kabulano!"

Rahmud's face lighted up with joy as he turned towards her. To-day he did not carry the big sack under his arm, and she could not, therefore, speak to him about the elephant. So she at once began with the second question, "Are you going to your father-in-law's?"

Rahmud laughed and replied, "Yes, missy, that's where I am going." But, noticing that the reply did not amuse the little girl, he lifted up his handcuffed hands and said: "Oh, how I should like to trounce my father-in-law! But my hands are tied!"

For his bloodthirsty attack on his creditor Rahmud was sentenced to several years' imprisonment.

Time passed away and Rahmud was no longer remembered. My customary labour occupied me in my old customary corner, and I never thought of the freedom-loving mountaineer who was spending his years in a prison. Even Mini, I am ashamed to say, forgot her old friend. New friendships occupied her life. As she grew up she passed her time more and more with girls of her own age. So much of her time did she spend with them that she no longer came into her father's study, as she had been accustomed to do. Now I seldom chatted with her.

Years went by. Again it was autumn, and we were preparing for the marriage of our Mini. The wedding was set to occur during the Puja festival. At the same time when Durgat would go home to Kailasha the light of my home too would go away--away to the home of her husband, leaving the parental home in darkness.

It was a bright and beautiful morning. There was a feeling of cleanliness about the air after the rain, and the rays of the sun sparkled like pure gold. So brightly did the sun shine that its rays gave a beautiful brilliancy even to the sombre-coloured bricks of our Calcutta streets. From early dawn the wedding orchestra had been playing, and at every beat of the music my heart beat in unison. Every note made my heart grow heavier with the thought of the approaching separation. Mini would be married that evening.

From the first hour of the day noise and bustle had filled the house. The canopy had to be set up in the court on its bamboo supports; the tinkling candelabra had to be hung in every room and in the veranda; the excitement and the enthusiasm seemed to be limitless.

I was sitting in my study looking through my accounts when someone entered the room and, saluting me respectfully, came and stood before me. It was Rahmud, the Kabulan! At first sight I did not recognise him. He was not carrying his great bag now, nor was his hair long, and his bearing was not the same. But when he smiled, I remembered him at once.

† Durga, a goddess of the Puja festival. After the festival she returns to her home in Kailasha, a mountain of the Himalayas.

"When did you come, Rahmud?" I asked.

"Last evening," he replied. "I have been released from prison."

The words struck unpleasantly upon my ears. I felt that the day would have been more auspiciously introduced had he not come.

"We are having a ceremonial affair at our house to-day," I said. "Can you not come in another day?"

He immediately turned to go away, but when he came near the door he hesitated, then said, "Could I not see the little missy, sir, if only for a minute?"

He believed Mini was still the same little person whom he had known years before. He imagined her running to him, crying out, as was her custom, "Oh, Kabulano! Oh, Kabulano!" He imagined that they would still laugh and chat together just as they had done in the old days. Indeed, as a souvenir of those days, he was then carrying, carefully wrapped in paper, some almonds and raisins which in some way he had obtained from a fellow-countryman, his own supply having been scattered long ago.

Again I said, "There is a ceremonial affair at our house."

His face clouded with pain. He looked at me a moment, then, murmuring "Good-morning," passed out.

I felt sorry for him in his disappointment, and I was going to call him back, when I saw him returning. He came up to me and, giving me the gift, said, "I brought it, sir, for the little missy. Will you please give it to her?"

I took it and was going to pay him, but he caught my hand, saying, "You are very kind, sir. Keep me in your memory; do not offer money to me. You have a little daughter; I, too, have one such as yours—in my home in Kabul. I think about her, therefore I do not bring these gifts to your little daughter for the sake of money."

As he spoke he put his hand into his big, broad shawl and drew out a little piece of dirty paper. With great care he unfolded it and smoothed it out on the table with his hands. It showed a picture of a tiny hand—not a photograph, not a tracing, but the impression of a hand that had been covered with ink, then pressed, palm down, upon the paper. And so this touch of the hand of his own little daughter was always on his heart while he was wandering, year after year, through the streets of Calcutta, selling his wares.

The tears rose up into my eyes. I forgot that he was only a miserable fruit peddler from Kabul, while I was—but who, indeed, was I? Anyone more important than he? He, too—was he not a father?

That impression of the little hand of his Parbati, made in her distant mountain home, called to mind my own Mini. I at once summoned her from the women's apartments. They did not wish to let her come, but I could not listen to their arguments. Dressed in the red silk garment of her wedding day, with the sandal sign on her forehead and adorned as one about to become a bride, Mini entered the room.

The Kabulan looked at her in wonder. He could never again enjoy with her the old friendship! Finally he smiled and said, "Missy, are you going to your father-in-law's?"

But Mini now understood the significance of that phrase, and she did not, therefore, reply to him as she had done at other times. The question made her blush, and she looked away from him as she stood there.

I remembered the day when Mini and the Kabulan met for the first time and I grew sad. After she had left the room Rahmud sighed and sat down upon the floor. The thought had suddenly come to him that his daughter, too, must have grown up during the long years of his absence, and he would now have to make friends with her anew. And what might have happened to her in those years!

The orchestra began to play, and the mild autumn sun shone brightly down upon us. But Rahmud sat in the little street in Calcutta, while in vision he beheld the treeless mountains of Kabulistan.

I drew out a bank note and gave it to him, saying, "Return to your child, Rahmud! Go back to your native land, my friend, and may your reunion with your daughter bring luck to mine!"

Having done this, I found myself, for want of money, unable to carry out all the details of the marriage feast, and for that the women of the household were much annoyed. But for me the affair was all the more brilliant because of the thought that in the distant land of Kabul a long-lost father would soon be united with his only child.

17 April, 1914

**THE DAILY CITIZEN**

p6c1-2(1D)

## **THE BOOKMARKER**

**By A. E. MANNING FOSTER**

### **"THE REALISATION OF LIFE" THE CHELA AND THE PERFUME THE ART OF READING OUR ONE GREAT PLAYWRIGHT**

In the "Sadhana" or "The Realisation of Life" (Macmillan, 5s.) Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the sweet Bengali poet whose "Gitanjali" or Song-Offerings, "The Gardener," and also the volume of child poems, "The Crescent Moon," will haunt the memories of men throughout the years, comes before us in a new role, namely, as essayist and philosopher. But Mr. Tagore is no mere talker and juggler with the phrases and phases of life; he is a Guru imbued with the Brahmanic and Buddhistic wisdom of the East, and sometimes his lofty flights rival "Brama Knowledge," "Dhammapada," and the sayings of the Bhagavad Gita. He writes on the "Individual and Universe," bowing "to God over and over again, who is in fire and in water, who permeates the whole world, who is in the annual crops as well as in the perennial trees."

This universality of God, this Pan-idea of His manifestation in macrocosm and microcosm, which the Vedas, Shastras, and Upanishads so finely illustrate by saying, "He is the sun and also the dew drop which mirrors it," is equally finely shown by Mr. Tagore.

His chapter on this entrancing subject indeed recalls the story of the Indian chela or disciple who, for love of the god Siva, distilled some wonderful rose-attar to perfume the divine image, which took him months of patient toil to prepare. When it was finished he took it to his Guru, or teacher, who was sitting on the banks of the Ganges lost in meditation, and said: "Guru, do thou offer this for me to the Lord Siva, for thou art more worthy than I." But the Guru seized the phial of priceless perfume and, with a little smile, emptied it out into the river. Then the chela wept and went away sick at heart. But, lo!

that night as he crept sadly into the temple of Siva to tell his sad story, a wonderful perfume flowed forth to him from the garments of the sacred image—the perfume of rose-attar. Then only did he realise the deep wisdom of the Guru, who knew that God was everywhere and that he had poured his libation out upon him when he cast it into the river.

Mr. TAGORE passes on to discuss the problems of Evil and Self, of Realisation in Action, Love, and the Infinite. The classic beauty of his style remains unimpaired to the end, he is a poet true to song throughout. "The play of life and death we see everywhere—this transmutation of the old into the new. The day comes to us every morning naked and white, fresh as a flower. But we know it is old. It is age itself. It is that very ancient day which took up the new born earth in its arms, covered it with its white mantle of light, and sent it forth on its pilgrimage among the stars. Yet its feet are untired, and its eyes undimmed. It carries the golden armlet of ageless eternity at whose touch all wrinkles vanish from the forehead of creation. In the very core of the world's heart stands immortal youth. Death and decay cast over its face momentary shadows and pass on; they leave no marks of their steps and truth remains fresh and young. This old, old day of our earth is born again every morning."

"It comes back to the original Reham of its music. If its march were the march of an infinite straight line, if it had not the awful pause of its plumage in the abysmal darkness and its repeated rebirth in the life of the endless beginning, then it would gradually soil and bury truth with its dust and spread ceaseless aching over the earth under its heavy tread. But every morning the day is reborn among the newly-blossomed flowers with the same message retold and the same assurance that death eternally dies, that the waves of turmoil are on the surface and that the sea of tranquillity is fathomless."

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April 26, 1914.]

THE NATION.

187

which combine the past life and achievements of their country. Thatched Church, set in the uplands of Essex, is one of the few examples of the ultimate development of Gothic architecture, in which the massive walls of earlier times are replaced by a more framework of glass and tracery, supporting, for all its frailness, large canopies of carved roofings. Moreover, it is unique in that it is impelled by the hands of the restorer; and it is more and more needed to meet the requirements of an increasing population. A new railway, a new industry, a reviving agriculture, already promise that in a few years Thatched will fully require the large proportions of this cathedral-like structure.

We therefore ask THE NATION to help preserve this church. The lead on the roof has almost completely perished, and the weather threatens to destroy the carved timbers of oak and Spanish chestnut. Even more serious, the tower threatens to give way, and to bring about the fall of the exquisite steeple, thus possibly destroying the nave.

The Bishop of St. Alban's, recommending the Fund, says that "there is real danger of irreparable injury if the work of preservation is not taken in hand at once." On the recommendation of the architect, Mr. Randall Wells, whose report is endorsed by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Preservation Fund Committee appeal for £2,000. When as much money is given to preserve, both for public and private collections, our national works of art, it should be easy to raise a few thousand pounds for a building whose beauties thrill the imagination of masses of people.

The Committee includes the Lord Bishop of Chelmsford, the Lord Bishop of St. Alban's, his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Plymouth, the Earl and Countess of Warwick, Mr. George Clouson, R.A., and others.

Further particulars, with photos, may be had from the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. H. J. Cunningham, Braintree, who will gratefully receive subscriptions in either large or small amounts.—Yours, etc.,

T. FOWELL BURTON  
WALTER GILBERT,  
RAYLEIGH.

April 26th, 1914.

## Poetry.

### NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE.

#### I.—THE RETURN.

(Ahalya, dissenting against the purity of married love, incurred the curse of her husband, and was turned into a stone, to be restored to her humanity by the touch of Ramachandra.)

Amidst the glow of your flaming passion, Ahalya, the curse struck your tumultuous life and stilled it into a stone, clean and impassive.

You took your sacred bath of dust and plunged into the primitive peace of the earth.

You heard the hum of all growing life and felt the beat of the great mother's heart.

When in the morning the warmth of the sun's kiss sent a stir underground in the countless roots of grass and trees and waving corn that clung to the earth like the eager fingers of the infant clutching the mother's breast—the rush of the mute gladness touched you with its throbs and thrills.

In the night, when the tired children of the dust came back to the dust, the rhythmic breath of the slumbering life fanned you and stirred in you the large placid motherliness of the earth.

Croepers twined round you the undisturbed bonds of flowering intimacy, and moths hummed inaudible tunes in their hushed household hidden under your shelter.

You became one with the great path where the slow ages pass in procession.

You bent your head low, kept your ear on the ground and waited in calm patience to catch the sound of the steps of the unseen corner at whose touch the shroud of night vanishes and silence wakes up into morning music.

Woman, the sin has stripped you naked, the curse has washed you pure.

You have risen into the perfect life.

The dew of the bottomless night trembles on your eyelids and the green mosses of eternal years cling to your hair.

You have the wonder of the new birth and the wonder of old time in your awakening. You are young as the freshborn flower and old as the hills.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

#### II.—FROM A POET'S DIARY.

THE first green comes on willow trees.  
And like a falling of slow rain,  
In hazel holt along the lane,  
The pendent catkins cross the sun.  
The light lies very still on these,  
And is most fair to look upon.

I watch, and lo! the light this way  
Is as a mirror 'neath the hills,  
That with the young Spring's breathing fills,  
With song and woodland water's noise . . .  
Joy grows more deep, mellow, than gay,  
Faint leaves more misty, or my eyes.

Down this low lane behind the woods  
She shares a shining trynt with me  
In silver sunlight virginly—  
To brim the mind with magic shows,  
Till man's becomes as maidenhood's  
Wherein a rainbow comes and goes.

Ay! meeting her, I feel my mind  
Clear colored as her early lights,  
Whose only dimness is delight's  
Deep breathing at the heart of things . . .  
Can man love her and hate mankind  
Who sees how you thrush sits and sings!

How over this still place there comes  
A sweetness like the white windflowers',  
Whose shy assembly fills the hours  
With maiden faces, that must draw  
The light down so to love their homes  
Beneath the shining oakenaw.

I see and hear—a living soul,  
For whom joy is for ever fresh!  
No crisis now comes in my flesh:  
My depths are lit from off a height  
Whereon the sun in aureole  
Sings; and the lark becomes a light

That throbs upon the middle air,  
And passes into time and space;  
Nor so eye sees it save with grace—  
Till shine and sound, till growth and years,  
Become one spirit molten there,  
So bright none sees it save with tears.

From heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,  
A gladness keeps the world in view—  
A promise of the spring come true,  
Through all the change of light and dark  
To which the spherul life is given:—  
One with the sunrise and the lark;

One with the noon that fills the flowers  
With brightness for the questing bees,  
While they, the flowers, delight in these,  
And move with murmurings and love—  
One with the dream that falls in showers  
Of midnight, when the star-signs move.

JOHN HILSTON.

14 May, 1914

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p236(W)

**EAST AND WEST**

**THE GARDENER.** By **RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net) **THE CRESCENT MOON.** By **RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net) **SADHANA.** By **RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** (Macmillan, 5s. net) **CHITRA.** By **RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** (Macmillan, 2s. 6d. net)

The appearance of Rabindranath Tagore in contemporary English letters is, however we regard his work, a very significant thing. Although the popularity that caught him up in a flame (a popularity unfailingly registered by the Nobel Committee) is likely to fade as rapidly as it was aroused, yet it is, in spite of all its depressing accompaniments, a significant response to a new attitude towards life. Fashions - especially literary fashions - may be trivial things in themselves; yet in the sum-total of fashions a certain not altogether superficial tendency of the mind may be discovered. Rabindranath Tagore may or may not be either a very profound poet or a very profound philosopher, but the popularity he has aroused is more than insipid discipleship.

Men have been tired of the merely intellectual pastime called thinking, that chases arbitrary symbols across the pages of books, and builds up systems for the mind without respect to the visions that are as young to-day in the blood of man, and in his passions and desires, as they were in what we call the youth of the world. Systems of utility that are never put to use; systems of evolution that never evolve; speculations that go outside man's constant hopes, that the following year soon outmodes, but which still continue weightily and earnestly to be discussed; all this dialectic has arrayed itself under the name of philosophy, which fundamentally has nothing to do with dialectic at all. To it came a man with a simple and quiescent attitude of soul; with the result that men heard something that all the fury of words could only cover with the *debris* of systems. "Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs."

Through all the agitation of sex discussions men heard that thing said, and they turned to it suddenly as to a very old and beautiful early memory, as men in a hot, dusty city feel a morning breeze suddenly blowing through its street from the high mountains.

The philosopher has no need to discuss wisdom. And if he have not found her, where is the place for discussion? What relation has the making of books by the professional (or for that matter, the amateur) philosopher to do with the life men live? Thus, instinctively, men began to reason with themselves - thus, instinctively, distinguishing between the finding of wisdom and the habit of logomachy. The uprise of democracy had broken with scant respect the aloof ceremony of feudalism; it began now to jolt those who hitherto had securely constructed their equally aloof logical systems. And in the essential paradox that life always is, a practical mysticism began to assert itself against perfect systems of metaphysics or economics that never went outside the two covers of a book. The East had always calmly assumed that wisdom was an attitude of the soul, not an activity of the brain, that the activity of the brain might even frustrate the coming of that wisdom. It is not difficult to see why the mysticism of the East began to flow over, and to overflow, the walls with which logical thinking had separated the oneness of life into departments. Those lonely bookshops that had stored the Books of the East began to muster large followings; and publishers began to find great virtue in books that would not long before have been regarded as odd curiosities.

Thus was Rabindranath Tagore's welcome prepared; but there was another element in that welcome not quite so obvious. Here was one of a company that turned even more earnestly to Christianity than to the Upanishads; who (through an intermediary canter of formal ethics) began slowly to see that the teaching of Christ and his immediate followers was also the propounding of a soul attitude, having little to do with the elaborate theological systems, older sisters to the philosophical systems, that have been erected in misconception of that simple thing. In the passage we have quoted from "Gitanjali," an echo can be heard of the declaration that "your body is

the temple of the Holy Spirit." It has little to do with Eastern temples, to which a nauch-seraglio is an inevitable annexe; and where the manhood is infested with disease. Yet the approach was authentic; the naivete is genuine; and we are reminded that Paul and his Master were also Easterns – that his brethren will dwell in the tents of Sem. There is a sharper reference in another song in the same volume.

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and shower, and His garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil.

Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully upon him the bonds of creation, he is bound with us all for ever.

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

Rabindranath Tagore's smoothly-flowing prose is not intimate enough to reveal the whole of his mind to us; nevertheless, we may hear in it enough to tell us that the two sources of his inspiration are not perfectly at resolution. Both have won him his audience; and Christ more truly than Buddha despite his emphasis on the latter in "Sadhana," but the two things coincide no more in him than in their respective teaching. "The gleaming vision flits on," he says in "The Gardener." "I try to clasp it firmly, it eludes me always. I seek what I cannot get, I get what I do not seek." That is scarcely what one would prognosticate for him after reading the unsatisfying (and, if such a thing may be, the befogging) certitude of "Sadhana"; but it is the experience of effort; and it is just this effort that so often gives the satisfying tightening of experience beneath the apparent peacefulness of his songs.

We feel in "Sadhana" that if its writer were less content to be the teacher, and more eager to canvass experience, it would better fulfil its sub-

title, "The Realization of Life." Rabindranath Tagore the student of old scriptures will not help us like Rabindranath Tagore the singer of new songs. Life re-creates itself in each of us as it never was before and never will be again. We catch that authenticity of recreation in the volumes of poems, where it is missing in the lectures that have been collected together in "Sadhana." The situation is very well exemplified in the play *Chitra*. Chitra was the only child of Chitravahana, King of his country; and she had therefore been treated as a son, on her devolving the warlike service of her country. She fell in love with Arjuna, of the kingly line of Manipur; but he despised her unattractive appearance, and she therefore obtained the boon of a year's perfect loveliness from Madana, the god of love. Arjuna, however, tired of the life and wished to taste of strenuousness again; whereupon, the year having expired punctually to his mood, Chitra stood before him ripe for adventure; and they sally forth for action together. Now in "Sadhana," Rabindranath Tagore writes of "Realization in Action", but neither in that chapter nor in any part of the book do we feel that he has seen any farther than the unfinished note on which his play closes. The book is curiously ineffectual. The attitude of the soul never seems to translate itself into living and vital experience, and even the exposition itself is unconvincing, and as academic as the systems ordered so economically by the reason when it was trusted as a faculty apart. The attitude has become stiffened – possibly by the enervating air of modern discipleship.

It is therefore to the poems that we turn, and of these volumes "The Crescent Moon" contains child-poems and are more childish than childlike. It was perhaps inevitable that he should not again reach to the level of "Gitanjali," for that volume was a careful selection of his work at a time when he could not confidently look at a large, and possibly not very discriminating, audience. Yet there are poems in "The Gardener" that are extremely beautiful. Not now being concerned with high spiritual concerns, he suffers himself a richer atmosphere. The poems are loaded with the landscapes of which they treat, intimately and with strange vividness.

When I sit on my balcony and listen for his foot-steps, leaves do not rustle on the trees, and the water is still in the river like the sword on the knees of a sentry fallen asleep.

It is in such pictures, and in the atmospheres and landscapes that play about the grave moods themselves, or in their aspirations, that our attention is caught. Apart from "Gitanjali" it is thus to "The Gardener" that we must look, for in truth the other volumes are disappointing. And yet, in spite of our disappointment, Rabindranath Tagore is, and remains, a significant figure. He leads to a restatement of the teaching of Christ; and there is more hope for our disappointment in "Sadhana" than there was for our satisfaction in the intellectual ratiocination of an earlier day.

30 May, 1914

**THE CATHOLIC HERALD**

p12c1(D)

**AN INDIAN POET-PHILOSOPHER**

**"The Gardener". By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan.**

Rabindranath Tagore has added a new contribution to English verse. He translates all his work from the Bengali himself, and so, perhaps for the first time, the passionate glamour of Eastern poetry has been rendered with success into the colder forms of English speech. The style is very much that of the Bible. There is no attempt at rhyme, though a beautiful and subtle rhythm runs through all the verses. They tell of life, of love mainly, and all have a philosophy of their own. As poetry the work is beautiful. As philosophy there is a little too much of the mood of old Khayyam to make it a solace or a prop through life.

15 June, 1914

**THE GLOBE**

p3c3(DE)

**MR. TAGORE'S ALLEGORY**

**"THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER"\***

Whatever other feelings may be inspired in the reader by Mr. Rabindranath Tagore's last book, "The King of the Dark Chamber," a sense of the beauty of the conception will certainly not be lacking. The real poetical imagination of it is unchallengable; the allegory, subtle and profound and yet simple, is cast into the form of a dramatic narrative, which moves with unconventional freedom to a finely impressive climax, and the reader, who began in idle curiosity, finds his intelligence more and more engaged, until when he turns the last page, he has the feelings of one who has been moving in worlds not realised and communing with great if mysterious presences.

Another impression left on the mind is that of the wonderful command of the English language to which Mr. Tagore has attained. Except now and again, it would be difficult to realise, without foreknowledge of the fact, that the author of "The King of the Dark Chamber" was expressing himself not only in a foreign tongue, but in one whose genius is so alien to the Eastern mind. To use English for the mere everyday purposes of life is comparatively simple; but to know it well enough to employ it as the medium of poetry and allegory, where a slip from perfect fitness and dignity must be fatal to artistic effect, is an achievement of which not all to whom English is the mother tongue are capable. And the right words, the just idioms, are not the only difficulty. There are the cadences—how has Mr. Tagore found the secret of them so infallibly?

With all its depth of meaning Mr. Tagore's allegory is simple in its statement. Many a reader may find satisfaction enough in reading it only of its story, and in leaving the underlying mystery—which haunts the narrative as in the poem-dramas

\* "The King of the Dark Chamber" By Rabindranath Tagore. Translated into English by the Author (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net).

of Maurice Maeterlinck - to take care of itself. Who is "The King of the Dark Chamber"? Several answers are possible even to that fundamental question. Is he Truth, Duty, Self-Sacrifice, or Humility? Is he the spirit of Christ himself? He might be, for his cardinal law is that he who would save his life must lose it; inexorable yet gentle; "stern law-giver, who yet doth wear the God-head's most benignant grace." He rules and yet is not seen of men. He is everywhere and yet invisible, or, when visible, unrecognisable; and his ways are justified only to those of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. He is not in the thunder of the whirlwind, but in the still small voice.

The drama opens on the eve of the great spring festival when many strangers have come to see the unknown King. The dominant note of the allegory is struck in this passage, put into the mouth of one of the strangers

As for roads in our country - well, they are as good as non-existent, narrow and crooked lanes, a labyrinth of ruts and tracks. Our King does not believe in open thoroughfares; he thinks that streets are just so many openings for his subjects to fly away from his kingdom. It is quite the contrary here; nobody stands in your way, nobody objects to your going elsewhere if you like to, and yet the people are far from deserting the kingdom. With such streets our country would certainly have been depopulated in no time.

It will be seen that here we have no attempt at grandiloquence or unnatural diction, but simple, matter of fact prose, the use of which enables the poet to make his effect without effort, and yet the more surely. Only occasionally does he descend to what, in the attempts to be colloquial comes near to the banal, as in the following dialogue:

*Koshala* All this makes one naturally suspect if these people have really got any King at all - it looks as if an unfounded rumour had led us astray

*Arante* - It may be so with regard to the King, but the Queen Sudarshana of this place isn't at all an unfounded rumour

*Koshala* - It is only for her sake that I have cared to come at all. I don't mind omitting to see one who

never makes himself visible, but it would be a stupid mistake if we were to go away without a sight of one who is eminently worth a visit.

But though passages like this break the spell of the narrative now and again, the language never fails to rise to true dignity and fitness whenever "the strong human call" is heard. And as for the cadences of the English tongue, how well Mr. Tagore has caught them is shown in his rhythmical versions of the lyrics with which his narrative is gemmed. Take this, for example:

My sorrow is sweet to me in this spring night

My pain smiles at the chords of my love and softly sings.

Visions take birth from my yearning eyes and flit in the moonlit sky.

The smells from the depths of the woodlands have lost their way in my dreams.

Words come in whispers to my ears, I know not from where,

And bells in my anklets tremble and jingle in tune with my heart thrills

To quote the quote of the Queen's own exclamation one may ask, "What sweet hermit of the woods has taught you this song?" And in another phrase of the Queen's may perhaps be found the key to the mystery of this poem, "A fancy comes to me - that desire can never attain its object - need never attain it." That is the lesson, and the Dark Chamber is the prison that all vain longing and ambition, fear and ignorance and selfishness make for the soul. Of Life's spring festival this is the last rite - "instead of the pollen of flowers, let the south breeze blow and scatter dust of lowliness in every direction."

18 June, 1914

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p294(W)

**MR. TAGORE'S NEW PLAY****THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER****By RABINDRANATH TAGORE****Translated into English by the Author  
(Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net.)**

No one had ever seen the King. Strangers declared that the country had no King. The loose-tongued of his subjects babbled that he dared not show himself - he was too ugly. A popinjay, "so soft, so delicate, and exquisite like a waxen doll," paraded through the city while it kept the spring feast, and the populace shouted itself into the belief that he was indeed the King. But other kings, who had come to the feast, knew him for an impostor; and one of them compelled his aid in a plot to burn the palace and carry off Sudarshana, the queen. Sudarshana, who had never met her husband except in the dark chamber, and was not content, like Surangama, her companion, to know him by faith alone. She has seen the popinjay and loved him. And when the palace is on fire the King reveals himself to his Queen. "Black, black," she cries, "oh, thou art black like the everlasting night," and she leaves him and returns to her father's kingdom. Thither the other kings come in chase of her, and with them the popinjay, now shrivelled to his mean reality. There is a battle; the King of the dark Chamber is victorious; and then his Queen, having risen above fear and even to faith, obeys the mysterious call which is his way of communicating himself. She takes the open road to return.

When I flung my dignity and pride to the winds and came out on the common streets, then it seemed to me that he too had come out; I have been finding him since the moment I was on the road. I have no misgivings now.

And in the Dark Chamber, the King and Queen meet once more.

**KING**

Will you be able to bear me now?

**SUDARSHANA**

O yes, yes, I shall Your sight repelled me because I had sought to find you in the pleasure garden, in my Queen's chambers, there even your meanest servant looks handsomer than you. That fever of longing has let my eyes for ever. You are not beautiful, my lord - you stand beyond all comparisons!

**KING**

That which can be comparable with me lies within yourself

**SUDARSHANA**

If this be so, then that too is beyond comparison Your love lives in me - you are mirrored in that love, and you see your face reflected in me, nothing of this is mine, it is all yours, O lord!

**KING**

I open the door of this dark room to-day - the game is finished here! Come, come with me now, come outside - *into the light!*

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength"- it is a lesson which all great spiritual natures have tried to impress upon the world. Mr Tagore, with his steady vision into the profound secrets of the spirit, tells us the same truth in new forms. What is his *King of the Dark Chamber* "meant for"? There are three obvious interpretations that might fit; but we believe that each man must find his own. The point is that, with all his serene and lofty beauty of soul, where laughter and gaiety glimmer like sunlight on the ocean, Mr. Tagore folds us in an atmosphere of confidence and faith, strips from us all tension and petty effort ("when you are past this state of feverish restlessness," says Surangama to the Queen, "everything will become quite easy"), and leads us out of the little aims and the conventional considerations to the simple duty of following the call of what we know to be the truth. The consolation, the refreshment of coming into contact with a mind like Mr. Tagore's is a privilege for which this age in the West should be especially grateful. And even minds insensible to the spiritual import of the play must be the richer for the passages of exquisite beauty in it - the songs and talk of the gay old grandfather with the simple heart of a boy, or the passionate sweetness of the

voice of Surangama or the words of the King himself. Side by side with the close of the play, quoted above, we might put a portion of the first scene between the King and Sudareshana:

SUDARSHANA

Tell me, can you see me in the dark?

KING

Yes, I can

SUDARSHANA

What do you see?

KING

I see that the darkness of the infinite heavens, whirled into life and being by the power of itself, and incarnated itself in a form of flesh and blood. And in that form, what aeons of thought and striving, untold yearnings of limitless skies, the countless gifts of unnumbered seasons!

SUDARSHANA

Am I so wonderful, so beautiful? When I can hear you speak so, my heart swells with gladness and pride. But how can I believe the wonderful things you tell me? I cannot find them in myself.

KING

Your own mirror will not reflect them – it lessens you, limits you, makes you look small and insignificant. But could you see yourself mirrored in my own mind, how grand would you appear! In my own heart you are no longer the daily individual which you think you are – you are verily my second self.

He that had mastered all that *Chitra* and *The King of the Dark Chamber* had to tell him, would have no lack of intelligence in love.

22 June, 1914

**THE DAILY CHRONICLE**

p3c1(D)

**Section : BOOKS OF THE DAY**

**A NEW FAIRY-TELLER**

**TAGORE'S LATEST WORK IN ENGLISH**

**THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER, by Rabindranath Tagore, translated into English by the Author. London, Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net**

By S.R. Littlewood.

Some of us remember – not many, for not many were there – the first public appearance of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore in England, where he was then almost unknown. One remembers the little room in Cromwell Road; the tall, thin, black-bearded, turban-crowned figure at the reading desk; the shrill, piping voice; the interminably dull complimentary speeches that had to come out.

One remembers the utter lack of any pose or conscious impressiveness of the part of Mr. Tagore himself. He seemed just to be perfectly happy reading his own work, and to care nothing at all whether anyone were listening or not. It began like the chirping of a cricket in a corner. Gradually one realised, "on the margin of consciousness," that he was reading something really good. The little parable of the princess who was jealous of her own loveliness began to steal its way into one's imagination. After a while one forgot the shrill voice, the dull speeches, the sleepy summer afternoon – one forgot everything except that beauty was born.

**A Spreading Fame**

Since then Mr. Tagore's fame has spread to the ends of our Empire and of the world. He has become a popular mystical cult, and every book of his is rushed for and crooned over. And what is the secret of it all – so far as we English are concerned? Is it not simply that here is a poet, a thinker, an artist who has done what seemed the impossible thing? He has told new fairy-tales. Mr. Tagore's stories and poems are not mere hotch-potch of

stock commonplaces. They are creations of his own. Yet they have the perfect simplicity, the inevitability of the old folk-tales themselves. One feels that Mr. Tagore himself is "fe"; that he has himself got in touch with that universal beauty, that universal destiny that is at the back of every true fairy tale. So it comes about that by a simple story he can throw in a moment a gleam upon human things that all the labours and analyses and definitions of the mystical philosophers are powerless to reveal.

Here again he has told a new fairy-tale - told it in the form of dialogue, with so little false adornment that the occasional lack of a perfect feeling for English words matters not at all. It is the tale of an unseen King and in its beginning it reminds one rather of the story of "Cupid and Psyche" as Apuleius told it, and as it has survived in the ever-popular "Beauty and the Beast." But there is much more in Mr. Tagore's story - a subtle and intimate yet exquisitely simple psychology, and all sorts of side-lights upon kingship and government and so on that arrive quite naturally, without the faintest straining of the delicate art of it all.

### A Dandified Pretender

While, for instance, the real king is never seen, even by his Queen when she seeks him in the "Dark Chamber," there is a dandified pretender who wins both her love and the adulation of the people for a time, and proves at poltroon in the end. There is also a usurper, a strong, forthright character, the only one for whom the unseen King shows any respect. In its way, of course, the fable carries us back to the Mosaic worship of the unseen "God of Israel" who dwelt "between the cherubim," and the inability of the surrounding nations, and of so many of the Jews themselves, to understand that mystical faith.

But the story is told by Mr. Tagore with a grace of fancy that makes it his very own. It would be difficult to conceive a more perfect picture than that of the four pilgrims - the Queen, with her Maid of Honour, the usurping King, both humbled in the end, and a half-mad old Grandfather, who is making "a jolly pilgrimage to the Land of Losing Everything" - all tramping on foot along a dusty road by night to seek the unseen King, with the old man for guide:

Surangama: King, you too are walking in the dust to-day.

Sudrashana: When I was the Queen, I stepped over silver and gold .. I could not have dreamed that thus I would meet my King

Surangama: Look, my Queen. we have not long to walk, I see the spires of the golden turrets of the King's palace

Grandfather My child, it is dawn - at last!

And who was the "King of the Dark Chamber" - who was terrible, but above all beauty, who was everywhere and nowhere? The folk who want a categorical answer to that question do not, after all, deserve to have one. Let them puzzle it out between love and death and destiny. Let them hear the song of the old Grandfather.

I am waiting with my all in the hope of losing everything

I am watching at the roadside for him who turns one out into the open road,

Who hides himself and sees, who loves you unknown to you

I have given my heart in secret love to him

But the "First Citizen" thought differently. He said that "somehow everything took such a turn that nobody knows what happened at all!"

22 June, 1914

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c6(D)

### Section: CURRENT LITERATURE

### POETRY

**THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER** By Rabindranath Tagore Translated into English by the Author. 4s. 6d. net. London: Macmillan & Co.

Following quickly on the heels of "Chitra" comes another prose play from the pen of this Hindu poet,

which again displays the characteristics that have come to be associated with the name of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore – a smoothly flowing English style, an effective use of beautiful and suggestive imagery and allusion, and an underlying depth of spiritual significance. The present work is allegorical. It tells the story of Queen Sudarshana, who was wedded to the invisible "King of the Dark Chamber," but whose love and devotion were not sufficient to prevent her from desiring to look upon the face of him, whom she had constantly heard praised as matchless in beauty and terror, but on whom she had never feasted her eyes. Then one day she sees the King and knows the reason for his desiring to remain invisible. He had intended to reveal himself gradually, for none could bear the sight of him unless before prepared for it. Horror and shame lead Sudarshana to desert him, and then her initiation into the real meaning of life takes place. Beauty casts its spell on her, and the doors of ignominy and shame are opened to her; strife is let loose in the land and blood is spilt, for Sudarshana is sought after by all the various Kings of the district. She goes to her father's house, but there she is received as one who has faithlessly left her husband, and has to work as a menial. The power of the King of the Dark Chamber, however, is not to be denied, and gradually makes itself irresistible with the now humble Sudarshana, who, knowing her need, returns on foot and in rags a pilgrim to his palace. Defeat brings freedom, and so her initiation is complete. The dark chamber of her heart had lain cold and empty, but now with fullest confidence she confesses her trust in him, and then perfected by suffering and sorrow, can be led into the light of day out from the darkened chamber. There is nothing new in the tale that Mr. Tagore has made use of in this play, but in his hands the idea is invested with a power and a charm that make as irresistible appeal alike to literary, artistic, and dramatic senses. The love lyric is of the delightfully ethereal kind, while the deeper meaning of the play shows a curious similarity in spirit to the Christian attitude of trust and belief in the power of the Unseen, without demanding that all things shall be made visible to the eye of man.

26 June, 1914

T.P.'S WEEKLY

p812(W)

#### Section: THE EDITOR IN HIS ANECDOTAGE

##### The Tagore Influence

Will the name of Rabindranath Tagore ever become so well known that the assistant in the country bookshop recognises it at once when heard? I ask the question because another book of his - "The King of the Dark Chamber" – a dramatic allegory, has just been published. It was only a year or two ago that he translated some of his verses and lyrics into English, a selection entitled "Gitanjali" enthusiastically introduced by Mr. W. B. Yeats. Since then the great Bengali has permeated various strata of our literary atmosphere. The Nobel Prize for literature was awarded him last year. Literature is, however, only one experiment of Tagore's genius. At Bolepur, near Calcutta, he has a large school conducted by a staff of teachers he trained himself. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., who recorded some impressions of his Indian rout in the "Daily Chronicle", visited this school. "I awoke", he said, "in the morning whilst the dawn was still, but a tinge of light in the darkness. Outside there was sweet singing, and I was told that every morning the school choir went round the gardens chanting hymns. The day is closed in the same way. For a quarter of an hour in the morning and in the evening the boys sit down in meditation. Twice a week they assemble in the chapel for common worship, and Rabindranath speaks to them and exhorts them to good living". I need not tell readers of Tagore how completely this picture harmonises with the spirit of his writings.

2 July, 1914

**THE DAILY EXPRESS**

p7c5(W)

### THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER

**"The King of the Dark Chamber" By Rabindranath Tagore. Translated into English by the author. (Macmillan and Co., Limited). Price, 4s. 6d. net.**

Rabindranath Tagore has kinship with Maeterlinck, in that allegory blossoms under his feet. Both writers – both poets, for poetry is their native field – have other sides to their genius; but both are most themselves when they are telling some story where the ground rings hollow, and where we feel that the spoken word touches something mystical, unspoken.

In "The King of the Dark Chamber" the Hindoo poet evolves in a drama hardly meant for the theatre a great spiritual theme. The scene is Indian – one is not even told so much as that – and one wishes to know nothing further, for the beings who come and go are souls, passions, rather than men and women. In a certain land of India, then, there is deep question concerning the King. None ever has seen him. Young men and restless thoughts doubt of his existence. The old are very sure that he has a real being, but can give little reason for their faith. At length there is a day when the King's coming – the King's presence – is announced, and the world flows out to meet him. Every one is stirred to a strange passion, and the red powder symbolical of love is flung by girls and men. Many kings are drawn by the presence of his long sequestered king, and his betrothed, a king's daughter, Sudarshana, waits in her chamber for her husband. She thinks that in the royal group she has recognised the lord of her love, but when a jewel that she sends to him is put into his hands, he lightly gives it to the girl who carries it.

The "King", in truth, is an idle pretender, yet he gains the chamber of the waiting Princess, having prepared his approach by setting fire to the palace, only dropping away when the true king arrives. To this true king Sudarshana cannot live her heart – he is cold, un compelling. She tells him of the chill that he brings with him, and asks for

death rather than love. Now we begin to feel the allegory close around us. The King forces no heart – the Princess is free to go. In going she feels a strange constraining power. She is drawn back to her lover. And then she knows him to be black. At the end of all the King speaks the great illuminating words: "I open the doors of this dark room to-day – the game is finished here. Come, come with me now, come outside – into the light"

Clearly the whole story of earthly love forms the experience of spiritual life. Sudarshana is the soul, longing for the higher life, yet flinging its love away on meaner desire, drawn on through pain and loss and disillusion to know the true King. Yet winning fullness of vision only when her dark chamber here is opened and she steps into the larger light.

Rabindranath Tagore has enriched a beautiful story with all kinds of jewel-work. His little winged lyrics are tender and airy beyond description, and all the rich East flows in his pictures. Sometimes, however, he lowers the dignity of his tale by a too colloquial word, and the whole tendency of his English style leans a little too much to the easy. But these are little specks upon golden fruit.

F.L

8 July, 1914

**THE YORKSHIRE OBSERVER**

p7c7(D)

### Section : LITERATURE

#### THE DRAMA OF TAGORE

Mr. Tagore's English admirers will probably find this mystical play a little disappointing. Not only is the theme of it alien to our ideas, and the meaning rather baffling in places, but the language has little of the compelling beauty to which Mr. Tagore has accustomed us. Either he has himself found the subject difficult to express in English, or he has grown weary of the effort, which must be very great, of reproducing in a foreign tongue the images and the thoughts which have already been clothed in their best and most fitting form. One can well

imagine how wearisome and disheartening that task must be, and the success which Mr. Tagore has hitherto attained ought not to blind us to its extraordinary difficulty. It is not like a translation from one European language into another, in which case the common ground of tradition and experience is of greater extent than that which is peculiar to each tongue. In these translations Mr. Tagore has to make real and vivid to us a world which is quite out of our experience, and he must often find that the nearest equivalents of the words which in his own language would express his meaning perfectly have connotations altogether different in English.

The King of the Dark Chamber never shows himself to his people or even to his Queen; here he visits in a chamber so dark that not even the outline of his form is visible. She wishes to see him, and is sure that she could recognise him. Told that her wish will be granted, she selects as the King a foolish pretender who has no other merit than a handsome form. When the King at last reveals himself, she finds him black as night, and shrinks from him in horror. Her realisation of his supremacy brings with it a complete abasement and self-surrender. The familiar moral of the superiority of the hidden and spiritual over the obvious and material is powerfully brought out, and there are deeper meanings which the reader finds somewhat elusive and uncertain

*10 July, 1914*

### THE IRISH TIMES

p9c4.D

### THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER\*

This very curious volume, published without any preface or other explanations, is in the form of a series of scenes loosely connected, wherein a large number of characters appear. This dialogue is translated by the author into a very commonplace and even vulgar English. As a foreigner he is possibly proud of knowing our colloquial and hardly gram-

matical talk, but to know how far he may go towards slang in such a piece as this is another matter, and one in which Bengalis in particular have made many comical mistakes. There are songs interspersed, which may be thought poetry in an Indian Language; in the prose versions he gives us there is neither depth nor dignity, and, perhaps, this should not be demanded, as they are sung by a comic grandfather and by children, But in any case there is no beauty in them.

We seem all through to move in a world wholly strange to Europeans, which it would be impossible for us fully to appreciate. But after we have waded through it we feel that Mr. Tagore is writing a deep allegory, in which an invisible king rules his dominions, and excites love and admiration, which all his rivals fail to do. Their attempt to dethrone him and carry off his queen fails miserably, and she, though so disappointed at never seeing him that she flies to home of her father, is still fascinated by the mystery of his existence, and returns to him a humble penitent to her at the close of the play he manifests himself. If this be a dramatic picture of the way in which an invisible god, often questioned, often disobeyed, still rules the world from his invisible throne, it is an allegory worthy of the author's lofty and pure philosophy, which has brought him so many readers and admirers. But surely he should have taken advice regarding the form of his play and the manner in which it should be presented to the English reader? The reason for his queen's adoration of the king are neither expressed nor clearly supported, and mere invisibility is hardly enough to account for such magical powers. We do not pretend, however, to have fathomed the depths of this oriental mystery.

11 July, 1914

**THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS**  
**[Literary Supplement]**  
 p4c3(D)

**Section: BOOKSELLERS: SOME BOOK OF  
 THE MONTH**

**DRAMA**

**THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER. By  
 Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan), 4s. 6d. net.**

Second only to the feeling of joy which a reader experiences in the beauty of Mr. Tagore's thought is a sense of wonder at the extraordinary command of the English tongue which is possessed by that great Indian poet. Though in many ways this strange allegory of the unseen King has not the holding interest of "Chitra," the speculation to which it gives rise in the mind of the reader, and the mystical treatment of this almost spiritual King, make it a work of a strange fascination. It is impossible to give the story in detail, but, in brief, it is as follows: There is a ruler of a country whom none of his subjects has ever seen. Even to the Queen this monarch is not visible, for he never meets his consort except in a dark chamber. A youth, with fair exterior and splendid apparel, takes advantage of the ignorance of the people of their King's appearance to pass himself off as the ruler of the country. Other kings who are visiting the country see through the imposture, but make use of the pretender to attempt the carrying-off of the Queen, who has fallen in love with the youth. The plot fails, and the King of the Dark Chamber reveals himself to the Queen, who finds him "black like the everlasting night." The Queen then leaves him and goes to her father's kingdom. After a battle, in which the King is victorious, the Queen, wishing to return to him flings her "dignity and pride to the winds and came out on the common streets, then it seemed to me that he too had come out: I have been finding him since the moment I was on the road. I have no misgivings now." The Queen then meets the King once more in the Dark Chamber -

KING: "Will you be able to bear me now?"

SUDARSHANA: "Oh, yes, yes, I shall. Your sight repelled me because I had sought to find you in the pleasure garden, in my Queen's chambers. there even your meanest servant looks handsomer than you. That fever of longing has let my eyes for ever. You are not beautiful, my lord - you stand beyond all comparisons!"

KING: "That which can be comparable with me lies within yourself."

SUDARSHANA: "If this be so, then that too is beyond comparison. Your love lives in me - you are mirrored in that love, and you see your face reflected in me; nothing of this is mine, it is all yours, O lord!"

KING. "I open the door of this dark room to-day - the game is finished here! Come, come with me now, come outside - into the light!"

SUDARSHANA "Before I go, let me bow at the feet of my lord of darkness, my cruel, my terrible, my peerless one!"

As to the meaning of this allegorical drama, every reader should find his own.

17 July, 1914

**THE BROAD ARROW**  
**The Naval and Military Gazette**  
 p65(2W)

**THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER**  
**By Rabindranath Tagore**  
**(London Macmillan and Co., Ltd.)**

The latest volume issued by this remarkable Indian writer is a most striking allegorical drama. The work, which has, as usual, been translated by the author, contains all the magnificent imagery and purity of language we always look for in his writings. One of the characters in this allegory - "Grandfather" - is a very striking portrait of one who has realised the true inwardness of life. Mr. Tagore is a writer who always has a message to deliver, and he conveys it with truly Oriental imagery. "The

King of the Dark Chamber" will rank high amongst the writings of its gifted author.

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23 July, 1914

**THE GLASGOW HERALD**

p10c8(D)

**"The King of the Dark Chamber". By Rabindranath Tagore. 4s. 6d. net. (London: Macmillan and Co.)**

It would be useless to analyse briefly Mr. Tagore's latest play. "Plot" is too crude a word to apply to such story as is contained in this allegory of the imperviousness of love, "characterisation" humorously futile in the case of the King whose subtle power bends everyone to his magnificent purpose. Greatness is not revealed by outward splendour, even the meanest servant looks handsomer than a king – that is the deep meaning of the play. And it tells how kings and queens had to abase themselves in the dust ere they saw the glory of the true King. It is the manner of telling that impresses the spiritual significance of the play on the reader. The mystery that surrounds the King – for all personal power is a mystery – whom no one has seen is maintained with consummate art and beauty, but the allegory, to Western notions, is spun thin, and much of the dialogue out of our world altogether, geographically and humanly. But what is spiritually common is phrased in language which is the ultimate expression of truth and beauty, and makes reality and romance seem one.

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24 July, 1914

**THE MANCHESTER COURIER**

p3c4(D)

**Section: THE LITERARY CORNER**

**THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER**

**By Rabindranath Tagore  
(Macmillan) 4s. 6d. net**

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore's new play furnishes still another example of the combination of Western-

ised thought and ideal with Eastern mysticism and phraseology, which is the outstanding feature of his work. His theme is an allegory of the quest of the human soul for its theme in itself perhaps the oldest in literature, but handled in the present instance with originality both of thought and expression. The play contains some singularly beautiful passages, notably some of the short lyrics, such as the following:

"Open your door. I am waiting the ferry of the light from the dawn to the dark is done for the day. The evening star is up."

"The cattle have come to their folds and birds to their nests."

The crosspaths that run to all quarters have merged into one in the dark. Open your door, I am waiting."

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25 July, 1914

**THE ATHENÆUM**

p128(W)

*The King of the Dark Chamber.* By Rabindranath Tagore. Translated into English by the Author. (Macmillan & Co., 4s. 6d. net.)

This is, we think, the least successful of the works with which Mr. Tagore has lately enriched us, and it even bears some signs of having seemed less interesting than the others in its author's eyes. At least that is how we should interpret a sprinkling of inadvertencies in his hitherto faultless English. The familiarities of dialogue are, in any case, not quite Mr. Tagore's vein, the introduction of such words as "awfully" ringing false in his deliberate chill diction. He does not say whether in the original Hindustani the play is in verse or prose; we should have been glad to learn also whether it is played, or was intended only to be read, in Indian. It leaves us with the impression – the problems of translation may partly have to answer for this – that Mr. Tagore is emphatically a lyric, and not a dramatic, poet. His lyrical gift itself, as we have remarked in earlier notices, though rare and beautiful, moves in

a narrow groove, and is freest when most sublimated. Drama, as he here presents it, affects us like cumbrous harness fitted to the translucent writings of an image. 'The King of the Dark Chamber' exhibits unconvincingly, because inappropriately, by means of a lifeless conversation and galvanic action, the truth which in the 'Gitanjali' gleamed from one page after another, as from successive drops of dew.

The play is from start to finish the calculated unfolding of an analogy. It suffers principally from the fact that almost before we have begun to read we have divined the meaning of the chief symbols, and that the action never unrolls rapidly enough to anticipate our interpretation of the subsidiary ones. Nor is it as if the action itself had intrinsic interest. Its interest is wholly dependent on the moral and spiritual ideas it is to suggest. But these, unfortunately, are not suggested — they are transparent, they are given away.

The first few lines of the play already reveal them:

*First Man.* Ho, Sir!  
*City Guard.* What do you want?  
*Second Man.* Which way should we go? We are strangers here...  
*City Guard.* Where do you want to go?  
*Third Man.* To where those big festivities are going to be held, you know...  
*City Guard.* One street is quite as good as another here. Any street will lead you there. Go straight ahead, and you cannot miss the place.

The Dark Chamber is the consciousness, the soul of man. It is dark because its King is invisible. Who its King is, and what, besides invisibility, are his characteristics, no reader of any of Mr. Tagore's volumes need be informed. Whether a play can be effective in which the chief personage often speaks, but never appears, is a question which might be discussed on some fitting occasion. To discuss it here would be academic, for we acquiesce much more readily in Mr. Tagore's invisible King than in any of his mundane personages.

14 August, 1914

### MONTROSE STANDARD AND ANGUS AND MEARNS REGISTER

p6c1(W)

#### Section : LITERATURE

**SADHANA: The Realisation of Life. By Rabindranath Tagore. "The King of the Dark Chamber." By the same author, and translated into English by himself. (London: Macmillan and Co.) 5s. and 5s. 6d. respectively.**

In books like these, eastern thought and the workings of the eastern mind are revealed to the more direct and practical and less mystic West. They cannot be dealt with in this column simply as literature, except under restraint, and to the measurable exclusion of their most suggestive import. They point to possibilities of bridging and blending, which the Western reading world has not yet fully realised - bridging the gulf between Oriental mysticism and Occidental reasoning, blending the genius of thinking and religious Asia with that of more dogmatic Europe. They make, accordingly, for that solidarity of mankind which it is fondly hoped may ultimately take the place of racial differences and antipathies. If the West has much to teach the East in science and the more material elements of civilisation, the East has more to teach the West in the true philosophy of religion and life, in the spiritual detachment which is the basis of a true psychology, and in defining the bonds between us and the Infinite. Each sees Truth from its own angle, and tries to reach it by the path of its own choosing. A more complete revelation must result from their interfusion in a larger union. We send missionaries to the East whose appeal, however, is chiefly to the emotional masses; the East replies through such missionaries a Mr. Tagore, whose appeal is mainly to the educated. With the latter, to a great extent, lies the diffusion of the message of the Orient through the masses. There is ground for a hope that the gain from the interchange will be mutual. In that light, the first of these volumes makes for reconciliation and the establishment of the claims of human fraternity. It also intensely broadens the average Western view of the operations of an over-ruling providence, more especially in respect of the

revelation of divine truth. After a sympathetic study of Sadhana, there is no radical disturbance of the foundations of existing faith, but the horizon opens out more widely to upward vision. It becomes all but impossible to cling to the restricted idea of one form, one medium of inspired truth, but that of one centre and source remains untouched. Then again, we are too apt to associate Oriental mysticism with something vague, unpractical and lacking in the intelligibility of Christian simplicity, but Mr. Tagore very briefly disposes of that mistake by telling of his own upbringing. He tells how, in his father's house texts of the Upanishads were used in daily worship, and how, without neglecting his duties to the world or allowing his interest in human affairs to flag, his father "lived his long life in closest communion with God." It follows that in Sadhana we are shown how the ancient spirit of India, as revealed in the sacred texts, is manifested in life. The author pleads that, in addition to logical interpretation, the full meanings of the living world can only be reached by the commentaries supplied in individual lives. He uses them both in conduct and preaching as instinct with individual meaning, having a personal application, both for himself and others. The book, accordingly, consists of ideas culled from his school discourses at Bolpur, Bengal, along with translated passages done by friends. These are arranged under eight heads, "The relation of the individual to the Universe," "Soul consciousness," "The Problem of Evil," "The Problem of Self," and "Realisation in love, action, of beauty and of the Infinite." In the first discourse the central idea is the unity of creation. We seem to enter the world of thought from the opposite side to that which we are accustomed. We are used to drawing a line of division between nature and human nature, between men and the universe. The forest dwelling ancient sages of India, on the other hand, in constant touch with nature, regarded themselves as integral parts of a larger whole. They felt "that there is no such thing as absolute isolation in existence," found the universal and the individual one harmonious existence, and held that man is at one with nature. This recognition of the identity of being, in essence and in source, is the core of the whole discourse. By an easy ascent we see how the man whose spiritual eyes are open comes to recognise the operation of the eternal will in the forces of nature. The next

step is the realisation of man's relationship with all, his entrance into everything through union with God, which was considered in India the ultimate end and fulfilment of humanity. The Upanishads describe those who have reached that goal as "at-one-with-God." Very often in reading the selections from the sacred writings of India, we are impressed by a sense of rarefied familiarity, and there is nothing more profoundly significant of the lofty stand taken by Mr. Tagore than his large and reverent re-interpretation of the sayings of Christ. This occurs again and again throughout the volume, and in every case either new light is thrown by the Indian teacher upon our own sacred texts, or they are invested with added meaning. As beautiful as they are impressive are many passages particularly in "Soul Consciousness" and "Realisation of the Infinite." Far from kindling controversial antagonism, they win unconsciously conceded assent by the subtlety of their charm. In this corresponding spirit the volume must be read. To study it in a mood of condescending and strictly conditioned approval, of modified dissent or carping and lukewarm acquiescence, is to misunderstand its message and miss its exalting effluence. Taken for what it really is, it will clarify thought, broaden sympathy, and inspire the ethical sense. We seem to hear a personal appeal of the author in the text he quotes, "Let thy heart be even as my heart is." Of "The King of the Dark Chamber," while recognising the affinity between it and the Discourses, we are constrained to speak with reserve. It is a drama, and it is an allegory, and we frankly want both a clue and a finely adjusted means of interpretation. It is pervaded by an essence of mingled idealism, spiritualised beauty, ethical truth and realism, but it refuses analysis. It lies outside the canons of conventional criticism touching construction, plot, movement, character, scene-drawing, and so forth. The King is never seen. He is a dominant though invisible influence and all powerful. Slander him and he is left untouched. You can blow out the flame of a lamp, but who can blow out the sun? Call him ugly, and he who does so "fashions his King after the image of himself he sees in the mirror." Is it not true that men's opinions are the measure of themselves, the little seeing reflection of themselves in littleness, the great in greatness?

To the detractor "Grandfather" says "You will find plenty of people ready to believe you: may you be happy in their company!" Foul tongues are the wings of slander, foul ears are its resting-places. "Have you seen the King?" asks one, and the reply is in song -

"My beloved is ever in my heart,  
That is why I see him everywhere,  
He is in the pupils of my eyes  
That is why I see him everywhere"

The essence of the play may possibly be formulated in this shape - that majesty is not in pomp but in personality, and he who would appreciate greatness a right must himself be great. Both judgment and love depend upon the Ego of judge and lover. Surely there never was such love-making as that between Sudarshana and the King, and it is a mere concession to an elusive element in the drama, something within the word that they do not clearly convey, to admit the inadequacy of the criticism of the spiritually alien West. Books like these, nevertheless, emphasise the existence under the surface difference of a mystic bond between Orient and Occident.

24 September, 1914

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p5c6(D)

"The King of the Dark Chamber" by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan and Co.: 4s. 6d. net.) is a poem, cast in a dramatic mould, and it is translated by the author himself. His command of a supple and delicate style makes his translation, I should imagine appear as beautiful as the original poem is good. Of course, it is marked by all the intangible and elusive mysticism characteristic of the East generally and of the author especially. The subject matter of the poem is the Soul's self-realisation, or the discovery of its counterpart, sole companion and King. After its gropings and wanderings, and its bid for freedom it comes at last into its own. While the soft and subtle airs of the East are playing about us and the age is giving itself up to making acquaintance with Oriental modes of thought and

turns of expression, this book should be read. Besides Mr. Tagore has already gained the ear of a thoughtful reading public interested in the wisdom of the East, and they will read his latest translation with eagerness.

3 October, 1914

**THE OUTLOOK**

p434-435(W)

### THREE POETS

THE CRESCENT MOON. By Rabindranath Tagore. Translated from original Bengali by the Author. London: Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.

THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER. By Rabindranath Tagore. Translated by the Author. London. Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.

CHITRA. By Rabindranath Tagore. London. Macmillan. 2s. 6d. net.

If you look down the index of the first lines of Mr. Tagore's *Crescent Moon*, which is the book of the songs of a child, you will see that many of them are the beginning of verse. "Day by day I sail my paper boats," "On the seashore of endless worlds," "When I bring you coloured toys," and "The boat of the boatman Mother is moored at the wharf of Raigaunj." (Don't you want very much to know how those last two lines are completed?) And then you turn to them, and to your disappointment they are all prose. But you forget this disappointment when you have read a little and discovered how extraordinarily clear seems the echo of the music of the original song through the prose. You could not for a moment doubt of the beauty of the original song; and though the most of it is beautiful simply as a clear echo, some of it is satisfying and complete in itself in the prose version. It is a dangerous thing to quote Mr. Tagore: an echo is so very fragile, and a fragment of it a pretty but meaningless sound. Still we will quote a piece which does seem to us satisfying and complete in its prose version.

I wish I could take a quite corner in the heart of my baby's very own world I know it has stars that

talk to him, and a sky that stoops down to his face to amuse him with its silly clouds and rainbows. Those who make believe to be dumb, and look as if they never could move, come creeping to his window with their stories and with trays crowded with bright toys I wish I could travel by the road that crosses baby's mind, and out beyond all bounds; where messengers run errands for no cause between kingdoms of Kings of no history

When you read that you forget that it is only the echo of a song. There are others, too - those pieces where child talks, which are not like the echo of the song, but the beginning before the song was made, the talk of the child out of which it was made. It is so natural and perfect that, as you read, you hear it out of the mouths of the children you know. And then with a shock you suddenly remember again that these are translations by a foreign hand out of a language that you cannot read.

In the two plays you are much more conscious that they are translations; they are mere shadows of something beautiful in the original; and so, though they are curious and interesting as in any shadow of a thing that you want to see, you cannot call them in themselves beautiful. A great deal of them is exactly in that stiff unreal speech into which we used to translate our Greek plays.

"But what stern vow is thine, fair stranger? Why dost thou wither thy fresh youth with penance and mortification? Such a sacrifice is not fit for the worship of love. Who art thou, and what is thy prayer?" How familiar is that style! And there are speeches which are the fish, flesh, nor fowl of speech. "Do not darken to-day's happy proceedings with your unwelcome prognostications." What do you make of it? You see behind it the very dim shadow of a man who should be amusingly pompous. And then, as in the *Crescent Moon*, you come upon shadows which are tantalising and intriguing and make you want more than ever to know the original, such a one as the shadow of the song of the mad friend who is in search of the golden stag.

"I have parted with my all to get what never has become mine! And you think my moanings and my tears are for the things I thus have lost!" A great deal of the *King of the Dark Chamber* is little

dialogues of the streets in which the humour and play of character which you suspect to be in the original are lost in the translation. It is either not good or not bad enough. If it were very much worse as English, if it were obviously the English of a foreigner, its very strangeness might be a good quality in it - you would read it as a separate form of speech to be judged by its own standards. But it is correct English, without ever being the speech of anyone but a foreigner. When the "Second Citizen" says: "He was at last fixed in the chest by a deadly missile," you do not recognise it as anything that a "Second Citizen" ever would say either in poetry or in prose, or indeed anywhere except perhaps in a newspaper. So throughout both these plays there is the stiffness of an unreal speech, though in some passages it is barely seen, as in this description of the wet woods:

My mind is busy with thoughts of hunting to-day. See how the rain pours in torrents and fiercely beats upon the hillside! The dark shadow of the clouds hangs heavily over the forest, and the swollen stream, like reckless youth, overleaps all barriers with mocking laughter. On such rainy days we five brothers would go to the Chitraka forest to chase wild beasts. Those were glad times. Our hearts danced to the drumbeat of the rumbling clouds. The woods resounded with screams of peacocks. Timid deer could not hear our approaching steps for the patter of rain and the noise of waterfalls; the leopards would leave their tracks on the wet earth, betraying their lairs. Our sport over, we dared each other to swim across turbulent streams on our way back home. The restless spirit is on me. I long to go hunting.

You need not think of that as a translation, though it has not in the English, what perhaps it has in the original, any individual quality in the choice of its words. You are continually conscious in both these plays of something beautiful behind which has thrown its shadow in the English, but it is only rarely that you would say that Mr. Tagore writes beautiful English - English, that is, complete satisfying in itself.

8 October, 1914

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p451(W)

**Section: 'NEW BOOKS AND REPRINTS  
THE TIMES WEEKLY ANALYSIS'**

**Drama**

The Post Office. By R. Tagore.

Translated by D. Mukherjee 73/4 x 5, 88pp,  
Macmillan 2s 6d n.

This little play was performed about a year ago in London by the Irish players. Mr. Yeats writes a brief preface.

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15 October, 1914

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p455(W)

**"THE POST OFFICE."**

**THE POST OFFICE. BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Translated by Devabrata Mukherjee. (Macmillan. 2s. 6d. net.)**

This is the little play which was acted last autumn in London by the Abbey Theatre players. It shows in Mr. Tagore a gift of drama. To read it is to want to have it acted, to want to hear the voices speaking softly this soft and gentle language, to see the slowly dying boy at his window, and the people in that busy and wonderful world beyond the window whom he now and then stops to talk with him. That is the first impression that the play gives, as a play should: an impression of actuality, complete within the limits of human life as seen and heard in a real world. The boy is very ill and feeble. He stays indoors, always by the orders of the pedantic doctor. He talks with the people who pass; and, as boys will, he longs to be out and about, doing the fascinating things that active people do in the world beyond the window. He would "go about, finding things to do," like his prosaic uncle; he would be a curd-seller; a watchman with a gong to beat, "dong, dong, dong!" a flower-girl, going into the forest to pick flowers; a healthy boy to play at ploughing in the street. Best of all, he would be one of the

King's postmen to carry letters from the new" big house on the other side where there is a flag flying high up and the people are always going in and out." All this is the perfectly "natural" desire for a sickly boy; and no less natural are his finer imaginings – the desire to be himself a flower, which puzzles the practical flower-girl, the visions of the King's postman,

Coming down the hillside alone, a lantern in his left hand and on his back a bag of letters, climbing down for ever so long, for days and nights, and when at the foot of the mountain the waterfall becomes a stream he takes to the footpath on the bank and walks on through the rye, then comes the sugar-cane field and he disappears into the narrow lane cutting through the tall stems of sugar-canes; then he reaches the open meadow where the cricket chirps and where there is not a single man to be seen, only the snipe wagging their tails and poking at the mud with their bills. I can feel him coming nearer and nearer and my heart becomes glad

Thus a slow-dying boy might dream and talk; and the external story, with its figures of Indian town or village life, is complete in itself. Yet what Mr. W. B. Yeats, in his brief introduction calls it "emotion of gentleness and peace" is the greater because all the time the story is trembling on the edge of allegory, as dawn trembles on the edge of sunrise. And at the end allegory breaks in with its full light of consolation and peace. The child has longed for a letter from the King to the scandal for the Headman and the terror of his unimaginative uncle, and there comes, not a letter but a visit from the Herald and the State Physician of a King even greater than he that built the new Post Office and employed the postmen. The light that has been gradually growing throughout the play floods it at the close with the sense of freedom in which the released spirit may enjoy more adventure than its childish dreams could ever imagine in captivity.

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16 October, 1914

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p4c2(D)

**"THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER."**  
**THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER.** By  
 Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and  
 Co. Pp 200. 4s. 6d. net.

There are lyrics in "Gitanjali" - "The Gardener" and "The Crescent Moon" - which find their place in English literature. They contain Mr. Tagore's "message" - contribution to art is at once a humbler and a prouder phrase to use - in a form in which our minds and the collective mind that is our literature can assimilate it. Mr. Tagore is a lyric poet: he has moments of a contemplative rapture when he expresses himself with a passionate nobility that can master a foreign tongue. When that rapture fails him he writes as a teacher. It is this rapture gives him his authority, and authority to gain him a hearing everywhere. Without it, those who have heard him before cannot listen to him, though they may attend respectfully and as a crowd, as he says here, "hypnotised by its own magnitude." A true lyric poet has his individual note like that of no one else. Some can pass beyond it to other forms of art which demand larger constructive and creative powers. Some in growing to these powers lose their lyric. A few rare men through this stress have the joyous song only the more freely welling up in them. Mr. Tagore is not one of these. Without his lyric he cannot express himself. His is a mind of a rare innocence, so that there is no covering up of his incapacities, and never is he infected by the self-hypnosis of the crowd. A mystic? What kind of mystic is this who hymns the passion of love, youth, motherhood, in an ecstasy of the senses? He feels the sharp sting of life. He sings its praises. With that joy he can overcome all its hardships and repulsions. When it leaves him he is left in a dream, a contemplation. He broods on his joy, and, familiar with the mystic literature of his race, would have his joy to be the lordship of which they tell. In his innocent acceptance of his gift he can see no demarcation between his active and his passive state, for is not the lordship of the great books beyond active and passive and all other seeming contradictions? Then, speaking without his rap-

ture, he lays before the world a vision he has never seen, the exposition of his own passive state in which the world and all its life are huddled away in the dim depths of a tropical forest or drowned beneath leagues of the seas of traditional thought. In this world it seems that nothing will ever stir again except, perhaps, his own joy. Other activities have no meaning; they are not. So it is for every lyric poet who remains bounded in his own gift and counts himself a "king of infinite space." He is that in his activity; without his activity he is less than the least of human brothers, and then, if he is wise, hold his peace. That wisdom is denied Mr. Tagore in his innocence. He gives us for Eastern wisdom his own acceptance of his inactive state. The East is wiser than that. These ancient words have come out of it: "I have nothing in the world to bid me toil; there is nothing that is not mine; and yet I cease not from my labour. If I did not act, without a trace and without relief, setting an example for men to follow, all men would perish. If for a moment I were to cease from my labours I should plunge the world in chaos, and I should be the destroyer of life."

Mr. Tagore's true philosophy is song, and there he has something of that spirit. In his expounded philosophy it trickles away and is lost in uncertain words. He writes plays (we have read only this and "Chitra") to expound and not at the bidding of his gift in inspiration. So he does not build, does not let ideas fill people and things until they become symbolic, but merely chooses symbols so that there may be no mistake as to his meaning. He does not even, like Hans Andersen, drawn away from his symbols to let in the light of humour on them, but lets his shadow fall on them so that their light is put out. But, every now and then, when he imagines love between his symbolic figures, the fire in him flickers up and he breaks uncontrollably into song, but the dialogue is no more dramatic than the compositions in the song-books where two voices bear the burden of the melody. From these moments of song all the other passages of this play fall away. Their heaviness bears them down, and they are lost.

The import of this play is that of the ancient matchless tale of Cupid and Psyche: the divinity of love that none may see with earthly eyes. Do we seek love as a possession and a prize, then is it lost to us save in the mercy which sustains our being.

Sudarshana the queen desires her love to shine kingly before the world. Her subjects desire a king who shall be as others. A false king arises. The kings know his falseness, but the Queen (being a woman) is deceived, and the subjects are cozened. Follow war, fire, disaster, and humiliation; the delusions of earth are buried and broken away and the darkness is destroyed and the light comes. It is a fine fable, but it is told with faltering art. Brave and sure is the touch, noble the use of words, when divine love is on the scene; but in the other scenes the symbolic figures - they are not characters - are all too anxious to act as Chorus to the play. There are two avowedly expository personages - a maid and a grandfather; but the rest proceed by a tiresome self-interrogatory which divorces the dialogue from the action and leaves the twenty scenes as separate as unstrung beads. Drama the play is not: poem it is not. true allegory it is not. It lives only by the lyric flames which destroy it. It lives, then, as a memory and not as a work of art to which the mind can return again and again and always find refreshment and new vigour, and finer memories are to be gained from Mr. Tagore's other works, those in which he is more truly because more actively himself.

G.C.

25 October, 1914

**THE OBSERVER**

p2c4(S)

**Tagore's Father**

Devendranath Tagore, father of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, was known as Maharshi, the Saint. Miss Evelyn Underhill finds a parallel to him in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. For the Maharshi was a rich man, brought up to a life of pleasure, and was "suddenly smitten by unwanted visitations" as was St. Francis in the lonely church of St. Damiano. 'I was,' says the Maharshi, 'no longer the same man... my mind could scarcely contain the unworldly joy, so simple and natural, which I experienced'." Devendranath, however, was unable to leave the world. He felt it was his duty to sacrifice time and attention to the affairs of his father's firm, which were in need of reorganisation; and Miss Underhill makes the comment about the autobiography (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.) in her perceptive introduction:-

"What we see here is no picture of a spiritual individualist renouncing the world in the interests of his own soul, but a great and noble personality taking up the burden of existence and depending upon others the powers which he has won - as St. Catherine of Genoa did in the busy hospital or the Blessed Joan of Arc on the battle-field."

The translation is offered as a "humble tribute to his father's memory" by Satyendranath Tagore, who contributes a succinct account of his father's life and of the Brahma-Samaj, with which he was so thoroughly identified. In the translation he has been helped by his daughter Indira Devi. The Tagore's are a very wonderful family, and all who love the poet's work will appreciate this autobiography of the poet's father - this authentic Indian saint who died in 1905.\*

7 November, 1914

**THE ATHENAEUM**

p486(W)

**DRAMA**

*The Post Office.* By Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan & Co., 2s. 6d. net.

We have contended previously in these columns that Rabindranath Tagore is essentially a lyrical poet, and the pleasure with which we have read this, the third of his plays to be translated into English, if in one sense it modifies, in another corroborates that view. For here drama speaks with a consistently lyrical tone; the action has a lyrical flavour; we see effected for the dramatic medium the same kind of compromise between symbolism and actuality as is obtained for pure poetry in one of Blake's songs. To compare 'The Post Office' with 'Chitra' and 'The King of the Dark Chamber' is to be aware that its felicity is in some degree accidental. In those plays, as in this, Mr. Tagore endeavoured to make a developing action, an interplay of characters, the vehicle for presentment of spiritual truths; but in both the burden of the message was disproportionate to the machinery devised for delivering it; characters and situations alike groaned under the weight of the ill-

[\* Reviews of *The Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore* appeared in several dailies. Only the review in *The Observer* is cited here.]

### THE TRUMPET.

The author of this poem, Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, is the famous Indian poet, whose lyrics, plays, and essays have brought in recent years a new delight to lovers of English literature. Mr. Tagore, who is personally not unknown in this country, himself translates many of his works from the original into English; and his command of our language has done much to make the West acquainted with the finest Indian thought.

Thy trumpet lies in the dust.  
The wind is weary, the light is dead. Ah, the evil day!  
Come fighters, carrying your flags and singers with your songs!  
Come pilgrims, hurrying on your journey!  
The trumpet lies in the dust waiting for us.  
I was on my way to the temple with my evening offerings,  
Hoping for the heaven of rest after the day's dusty toil;  
Hoping my hurts would be healed and stains in my garments washed white,  
When I found thy trumpet lying in the dust.  
Has it not been the time for me to light my lamp?  
Has my evening not come to bring me sleep?  
O, thou blood-red rose, where have thy poppies faded?  
I was certain my wanderings were over and my debts all paid  
When suddenly I came upon thy trumpet lying in the dust.  
Strike my drowsy heart with thy spell of youth!  
Let my joy in life blaze up in fire.  
Let the shafts of awakening fly piercing the heart of night and a thrill of dread  
shake the palsied blindness,  
I have come to raise thy trumpet from the dust.  
Sleep is no more for me—my walk shall be through showers of arrows.  
Some shall run out of their houses and come to my side—some shall weep,  
Some in their beds shall toss and groan in dire dreams:  
For to-night thy trumpet shall be sounded.  
From thee I had asked peace only to find shame.  
Now I stand before thee—help me to don my armour!  
Let hard blows of trouble strike fire into my life.  
Let my heart beat in pain—beating the drum of thy victory.  
My hands shall be utterly emptied to take up thy trumpet.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Fig. 22 Tagore's poem published *The Times*

26 October 1914, p9

concealed transcendentalism. Here the whole episode is one of child life; we have scenes, simply, from the illness and death of an imaginative child, and see them as he sees them; and while the symbolic idea is not obtruded, and does not, as we apprehend it, assume inappropriate definiteness, the purely human interest is exquisitely sustained, and the management of such dramatic opportunities as the simple situation affords is always happy.

In brief, little Anil (whom the doctor will not allow to leave his room) drives from passers-by before his window, and his own sweetly pictured and child-like fancy, the idea that he is shortly to receive a letter from the King. Only a little while ago the great post office was built opposite, and there he sees it, with its "golden flag flying." The idea of the letter grows in his mind through the sympathetic understanding of a certain "gaffer," and is the happiness of his last moments. The headman of the village, hearing the tale

tries to make it a pretext for one of his usual clumsy bullyings, and brings a sheet of blank paper to tease the dying child. But he, not to be undecieved, accepts this as the real letter he has waited for; and at once a herald entering announces that the King has sent his greatest physician to wait upon the child, and will himself visit him that night in person. The whole play has prepared us to see in Anil, with his gentleness and innocent devotions, one whose death is thus fitly portrayed, and the effect is one of singular unity and beauty.

The translation of the play has not, we notice, been undertaken by Mr. Tagore himself. Mr. Devabrata Mukerjee's English has, however, the qualities of limpidity and evasiveness to which Mr. Tagore has accustomed us and is perfectly adequate to the occasion.

1915

7 January, 1915

**THE MORNING POST**

p2c2(D)

### **EASTERN MYSTICISM**

ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF KABIR. Translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted by Evelyn Underhill. Published by the India Society, 7s. 6d. net.

The poet Kabir, a selection from whose songs is here for the first time submitted to English readers, is a product of the contact between personal and impersonal religions in India. He was born in or near Benares, of Mohammedan parents, about 1440, and became in early life a disciple of the Hindu ascetic Ramananda, who brought to Northern India the revival of Brahmanism initiated in the South three centuries before. It is true, no doubt, to say – as Mrs. Stuart Moore says in her Introduction, an ecstasy of emotionalised fact which suggests S. Theresa making hay in an Indian civilian's library – that Kabir had a warmly human and direct apprehension of God as the supreme ever-increasing rebellion against purely intellectualistic conceptions of religion. But a note of Western fleshliness has somehow crept into these otherwise happy translations which is quite repugnant to the spirit of Eastern mysticism – a mode of religious rapture which is still cool and lucid and dispassionate as dawn over the Himalayas, the eternal symbols of those heights of speculation where the snows of thought rest everlastingly. Here is an example of the translations, which are chiefly the work, we are assured, of the Bengal master-poet who has made such noble use of the liberties of the English language:

On Narad! I know that my Lover cannot be far,  
When my Lover wakes, I wake; when He sleeps  
I sleep.

He is destroyed at the root who gives pain to my  
Beloved.

Where they sing His praise, there I live;  
When He moves, I walk before Him; my heart  
yearns for my Beloved.

The infinite pilgrimage lies at His feet, a million  
devotees are seated there

Kabir says, "The Lover Himself reveals the glory  
of true love."

This version is more a transmutation than a translation; it is Kabir mingled with modernity and feminine sentiment, a kind of spiritual sherbet with not enough snow in it. The truth is that the outpourings of Eastern mysticism cannot be Englished; the symbols of our language are too gross and palpable to convey the precise meaning of raptures that are light rather than heat; Kabir's poems must be read, if read at all, in the original tongue. The Western mystic cannot think of Love without a lover – hence the dangerous talk of the "wound of love" and so forth, which is a symptom of Faith's green sickness. Believing as we do that there is more need of interest than of emotion, if religion is to renew its power in the world of to-day, we must deplore the fantastical fleshliness of the Neo-mystics (mostly women) who are reviving amongst us the spiritual diseases of the mediaeval cloister.

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7 March, 1915

**THE OBSERVER**

p4c4(S)

### **KABIR**

**KABIR'S POEMS.** Translated by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan.) 4s. 6d. net.

Miss Evelyn Underhill, in her admirable introduction, tells us that Kabir was a mystic poet, who was born in or near Benares, probably about the year 1440:

"A great religious reformer, the founder of a sect to which nearly a million northern Hindus still belong, it is yet supremely as a mystical poet that Kabir lives for us. His fate has been that of many revealers of Reality. A hater of religious exclusivism, and seeking above all things to initiate men into the liberty of the children of God, his followers have honoured his memory by re-erecting in a new place the barriers which he laboured to cast".

He was a great reconciler, and wished to end the conflict between Hindus and Moslem by showing that each were seeking by their own means the same end. "It is but folly to ask what the caste of a saint may be, the barber has sought God, the washerman and the carpenter. Hindus and Moslems alike have achieved that End, where remains as mark of distinction" He is near, too, to that part of Christianity which says that God is love, and the Kingdom of God is within you. He dares to say: "If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this world belong? ... Look within your heart, for there you will find both Karim and Ram; all the men and women of the world are His living forms". The thought in which bears an astonishing resemblance to that of Samuel Butler (supposed to be a scolder) when he writes:-

"For the theologian dreams of a God sitting above the clouds among the cherubim who blow their loud uplifted angel trumpets before Him, and honour Him as though He were some despot in an Oriental tale, but we enthroned Him upon the wings of birds, on the petals of flowers, on the faces of our friends, and upon whatever we most delight in of all that lives upon the earth."

March 10, 1915.

### Two of Kabir's Poems.

#### I.

Why so impatient, my heart?  
He who watches over birds, beasts, and insects,  
He who cared for you whilst you were yet in your mother's womb,  
Shall he not care for you now that you are come forth?  
O my heart, how could you turn from the smile of your Lord and wander so far from him?  
You have left your Beloved and are thinking of others; and this is why all your work is in vain.

#### II.

O my heart! the Supreme Spirit, the great Master, is near you! Wake, oh wake!  
Run to the feet of your Beloved: for your Lord stands near to your head  
You have slept for unnumbered ages;  
This morning will you not wake?

—From "One Hundred Poems of Kabir,"  
Translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted  
by Evelyn Underhill (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net).

Fig. 23 Kabir's poems in  
*The Christian Commonwealth*, 10 March 1915, p287

13 March, 1915

THE NATION

p756-758(V)

"The Post Office". By Rabindranath Tagore.  
Translated by DEVABRATA MUKHERJEA  
(Macmillan. 2s. 6d. net)

It is the theme of Dostoieffsky's great novel, "The Idiot", that true health is of the soul alone; and that those who possess it, whatsoever their mental and physical disadvantages, exercise a transforming and illuminating influence upon their fellow-men. The beautiful character of the epileptic idealist, Prince Muishkin, brings out fresh values, distinguishes the true realities in all the lives with which he is brought into contact, however marred, frivolous, degraded they may be. In some such way does Mr. Tagore, in the first act of this delicately beautiful little play, make of the figure of the dying child, Amal, a touchstone wherewith to appraise and exhibit the sweetness and beauty inherent in the common existence. Amal has the vision of the pure in heart. Sitting all day at his window, and thence looking out on the world, he knows by instinct the true secret of that life which he is going to leave so soon; and confers it, as Pippa conferred new happiness and purity, on those who come within his reach. His life is the life of everything that surrounds him. As the first Franciscans possessed everything that they gave up, so Amal, by his eager sympathy, shares from his window the movement of the world, and finds it full of joy and romance. The distant hills, the river path, the village, the cows waiting to be milked - these he loves and understands, though he has never seen them. The careers of the curd-seller, the watchman, the postman, the tramp, seem to him great and enviable vocations. The simplest things are splendid to him, the most monotonous tasks are great.

In the radiant heaven-world of the child's imagination, even the great new post-office becomes a place of wonder and of mystery, through which the King, a shrouded figure who is for Amal something more than human, sends letters to his humblest subjects, "even to little boys". Since our universe is very much what we choose to make it, this King is but an earthly monarch for the

consequential village Headman and his matter-of-fact friends. But for Amal and the kindly old gaffer – one of those simple yet mystical natures whom Mr. Tagore draws with so sure a hand – he is a spiritual presence who will not fail to show himself to all who wish to see him; and the letters which he sends to his subjects are messages from another world. And gradually, as the second act of the play progresses, it is this reading of reality which triumphs over the other. The mystical atmosphere becomes more evident, the vision of the child and the saint conquers the certitudes of common sense; and that simplicity which gave to Amal the key of earthly happiness unveils the hidden kingdom too. Whilst the Headman is still mocking the little boy's delirious fancies and the folly of those who encourage him, the King's Herald is at the door; the royal physician enters, and we cannot doubt the nature of the healing that he brings. He opens the windows to the sky, lays merciful hands upon Amal's body. The starlight streams into the room; the sick and weary child falls asleep. "When will he awake?" asks the little flower-girl who loved him. "Directly the King comes and calls him", the physician replies.

The present reviewer well remembers Mr. Tagore's surprise and amusement at the well-intentioned efforts of his more earnest admirers to extract a "definite lesson" from "The Post Office" when it first appeared upon the English stage. Hungry for symbolism but strangely impervious to poetry, they tried to find hidden meanings in every character, almost in every phrase. One felt sure that the flower-girl represented Sensuous Beauty, another that the curd-seller stood for the Natural Life. The poet himself was amazed by this revelation of a mental outlook which confused the methods of the preacher and the artist. His own meaning and intention, as Mr. Yeats observes in his prefatory note, was "emotional and simple". To adopt the phrase of another Indian mystic, he offered a delicate blossom to the bee of the heart; not that it might be dissected, but that it might be tasted and enjoyed. In "The Post Office" we find again that characteristic treatment of childhood, at once natural and supernatural, which marked "The Crescent Moon". It is no allegory, but the dramatic presentation of an incident fully charged with those spiritual intimations and correspondences which the

great artist finds everywhere in life; and which it is his supreme business to gather up and offer, in forms of ordered beauty, to his fellow-men. Mr. Devabrata Mukerjea is responsible for the English translation

19 March, 1915

**THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST**

p4c7(D)

**KABIR'S POEMS. Translated by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan.) 4s. 6d. net.**

Kabir, like the great Emperor Akbar, moulded a composite creed out of a combination of Hinduism and Mohammedanism, with perhaps elements from Zoroastrianism and Christianity added to the compound. But in his works will be found few of the characteristics of Mohammedanism familiar to the man in the street. Houris and the angel Gabriel, and the justification of the spread of religion by the sword are conspicuous by the absence from his poems. In like manner he sees no virtue in the elaborate ceremonials so finely observed by Hindus. "There is nothing but water at the holy bathing places, and I know that they are useless for I have bathed in them. The images are lifeless, they cannot speak; I know, for I have cried aloud to them. The Purana and the Koran are mere words". In fact he is a heretic to both of the great religions of India (which is nominally combined). His creed is based on Sufism and the mysticism that exists side by side with the grossest superstitions of Hinduism. It is a kind of mystical optimism that inspires his beautiful poems translated by Rabindranath Tagore in prose verse that remind us of the authorised version of the poetical works of the Bible. When we read his account of his conversion to nobler ideas of God, we might be reading a chapter from Isaiah. "From that time forth", sighs, "I knew no more how to roll in the dust in obeisance; I do not ring the temple bell; I do not set the idol on its throne; I do not worship the image with flowers. It is not the austerities that mortify the flesh which are pleasing to the Lord; when you leave off your clothes and kill your senses you do not please the Lord. The man who is kind and who practises righteousness, who considers all creatures on earth as

his own self, he attains the immortal being, the true God is ever with him". Everywhere he hears the rhythmic beat of the Unstruck Music of the Universe, is resounding love songs, and sees God's love in his own soul and body and in the beauty of all around him, as when he looks out on the glamour of an Indian sunset and hears the tinkling of bells from the village in the distance. "The shadows of evening fall thick and deep, and the darkness of love envelope the body and the mind. Open the windows to the west and be lost in the sky of love; drink the sweet honey that steeps the petals of the lotus of the heart. Receive the waves in your body: what splendour is in the region of the sea! Hark: the sounds of conches and bells are rising". In word pictures like this the cool of the tropical evening is brought home to us as it was when Adam and Eve walked in the garden of Eden and heard the voice of God. Many of Kabir's poems, though translated in pure and lucid English, are somewhat misty and obscure. Therefore, the authoress of "Mysticism" has done well to prefix to the translation a clear exposition of Kabir's views regarding the universe, God and man illustrated by reference to the poems that follow. Thus the book, taken as a whole, is not only a collection of delightful poems pervaded by subtle thought and expressed in felicitous language, but may also serve as an introduction of oriental religion and philosophy.

22 March, 1915

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c2(D)

### ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF KABIR

**Translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted by Evelyn Underhill. 4s. 6d. net. London: Macmillan.**

Kabir, an Indian poet of the fifteenth century, was a disciple of the Hindu ascetic Ramananda, and the greatest of the Vaishnava reformers of religion in North India. Little is known of the course of his life, but it seems clear that he was a simple man of the people, who earned his daily bread as a weaver. He refused to practice the austerity which the as-

cetic life of the time demanded, and was persecuted for his indulgence in the ordinary joys of mankind. His conviction of the truth of his beliefs, the power of his doctrine, and the homely manner in which it was expressed won him multitudes of adherents, and there is a striking resemblance between the views accepted by Kabirpanthis and those given forth by the Founder of Christianity. Kabir's appeal at the present day is a mystical poet, and in this collection of translations, the first to appear in the English language, the depths to which his mysticism takes him are clearly brought out. The songs are written in the popular Hindi, not in the literary language, and were addressed primarily to the people. They refer to incidents in everyday life, and by simple metaphors drive home the appeal of the Eternal. Kabir is fortunate in having a poet as his translator, and it is interesting to note the characteristic Tagore touches in many of the passages. For the English reader, however, the poems have little more than an historical interest, though, the following prose of Mr. Tagore serves to give them a wider appeal.

3 April, 1915

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p5c2(D)

### A HINDU POET

Kabir, whose writings are here brought before English readers for the first time, was a Hindu poet of the Fifteenth Century. In an interesting introduction of over forty pages, Miss Evelyn Underhill explains that he was born in or near Benares about 1440 A.D.; and though his parents were Mohammedans, he himself early came under the influences of the Hindu reformer Ramananda. Kabir, though suffering some persecution, lived to a good old age, dying in 1518 at Maghad.

His poetry, as presented in the selections before us (Kabir's Poems, translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted by Miss Evelyn Underhill: Macmillan: 4s. 6d. net.) is of an extremely mystical character, and may not suit the taste of all readers. Some may fancy that it is rather over their heads. But, though in

form it may occasionally be unfamiliar and a little difficult, no reader of the English Bible, or even of George Herbert, can complain that in spirit the present work is too esoteric. In fact, neglecting the mere letter of it – symbols such as Brahma, the Guru, etc. – the Christian may find here an expression of his own faith and aspirations.

Kabir maintains a commendable mean between anthropomorphism and that ecstatic extreme in which worshipped and worshipper are confounded. The Beloved – the Over-Soul – is neither a distant Being nor an Infinite abstraction. Kabir's view is essentially one with that of our own poets, e.g., Blake and Tennyson; and, indeed, of a greater than they, as witness Romans viii., 16. Kabir often expresses this conviction with an almost Herbertian quaintness and sincerity:

Your Lord is near: yet you are climbing the palm-tree to seek Him.  
And again:

I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty.

This sublime faith in the Divine omnipresence colours and ennobles Kabir's whole work. Happy if such a grand realisation could be brought home to the mind and heart of every man. It would transfigure the world. In the hope that the present volume will do somewhat towards that consummation, we are glad that this fervent voice out of an old century has been made audible to English ears.

16 April, 1915

## THE DAILY NEWS AND LEADER

p8c5(D)

### KABIR

(By ROBERT LYND)

"One Hundred Poems of Kabir." Translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted by Evelyn Underhill. Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net.

Kabir was one of the most fortunate poets who ever lived. He was so beloved by all sorts and conditions of men that, when he died, the Hindus

wished to burn him and the Mohammedans to bury him. This is the Land's End of charity. The two sects, we are told, began to dispute hotly as to the disposal of the body, but when the disputants went into the room where it had been laid the body had disappeared and in its place was a heap of flowers. It is manifest that Kabir was a prophet in his own country – the India of the fifteenth century. He is a prophet even to-day. We learn from the introduction that he has still nearly a million followers in Northern India, who alas! have turned his heterodoxy into an orthodoxy. He felt the call to the religious life at an early age, and desiring to become a disciple of Ramananda he hid himself on the steps leading down to the Ganges, where the teacher used to bathe. Ramananda, stepping on the boy's body, cried out in his astonishment "Ram! Ram!" – the name by which he was accustomed to call upon God. Kabir thereupon regarded himself as having been initiated into discipleship.

### The Weaver Poet

Following the trade of a weaver, Kabir taught the simple people around him about the love of God. His poetry is poetry of the love of God. It is a love-poetry, as the translators say, but love-poetry with a missionary purpose. It is not great poetry, apart from its purpose, but it does at its best express emotionally the soul's longing for God as in lines like these:

My body and my mind are grieved for  
the want of Thee.

O my Beloved! come to my house  
When people say I am Thy bride, I am  
ashamed, for I have not touched Thy  
heart with my heart.

Then what is this love of mine? I have  
no taste for food, I have no sleep,  
my heart is ever restless within doors and  
without

As water is to the thirsty, so is the lover  
to the bride. Who is there that will  
carry my news to my Beloved?

Kabir is restless, he is dying for sight of  
Him

And again, in this other poem, in spite of a too prosaic translation of the last line:

Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale.  
 From what land do you come, O Swan?  
 to what abode will you fly?  
 Where would you take your rest, O Swan,  
 and what do you seek?  
 Even this morning, O Swan, awake, arise,  
 follow me!  
 There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow  
 have rule, where the terror of  
 Death is no more  
 There the woods of spring are a-bloom,  
 and the fragrant scent "He is I"  
 is borne on the wind.  
 There the bee of the heart is deeply  
 immersed, and desires no other joy.

In both of these poems we have simple and emotional statements of an undying human passion so simple as to seem almost ordinary, and yet too sincerely emotional to be called ordinary.

### A Hater of Ritual

Kabir's heresy was shown in his contempt for ritual on the one hand, and for asceticism on the other. In one of his poems he pours scorn on the forms and ceremonies with which the Yogi satisfies his religious impulses:

The Yogi dyes his garments,  
 instead of dyeing his mind in the colours  
 of love.  
 He sits within the temple of the Lord,  
 leaving Brahma to worship a stone.  
 He pierces holes in his ears, he has a  
 great beard and matted locks, he looks  
 like a goat.  
 He shaves his head and dyes his  
 garments, he reads the Gita and becomes  
 a mighty talker.  
 Kabir says: "You are going to the doors  
 of death, bound hand and foot!"

In another poem he expresses beautifully his liberation from the ceremonial temple into the spiritual life:

O brother! when I was forgetful, my true  
 Guru showed me the way,

Then I left off all rites and ceremonies,  
 I bathed no more in the holy water;  
 Then I learned that it was I alone who  
 was mad, and the whole world beside  
 me was sane; and I had disturbed  
 these wise people  
 From that time forth I knew no more  
 how to roll in the dust in obeisance:  
 I do not ring the temple bell;  
 I do not set the idol on its throne;  
 I do not worship the image with flowers.  
 It is not the austerities that mortify the  
 flesh which are pleasing to the Lord.  
 When you leave off your clothes and kill  
 your senses, you do not please the  
 Lord;  
 The man who is kind and who practises  
 righteousness, who remains passive  
 amidst the affairs of the world, who  
 considers all creatures on earth as his  
 own self.  
 He attains the Immortal Being, the true  
 God is over with him  
 Kabir says: "He attains the true Name  
 whose words are pure, and who is free  
 from pride and conceit"

Occasionally his gospel is phrased in a manner that seems rather jargonish in Western ears, as when he writes:

Before the Unconditioned,  
 the Conditioned dances:  
 "Thou and I art one!" this trumpet  
 proclaims  
 The Guru comes, and bows down before  
 the disciple;  
 This is the greatest of wonders  
 It is not the weaver, but the philosopher,  
 who speaks here.

### Alien Images

Some of the imagery is also alien from these skies, as in the line:

Take your seat on the thousand petals  
 of the lotus, and there game on the  
 Infinite Beauty.

And again in the line:

Beneath the great umbrella of my King  
millions of suns and moons and stars  
are shining!

For some reason or other, images like these awaken not ecstasy, but amusement, in the Western reader. On the other hand, how excellent, if common and simple, an image of an adoring world do we find in the lines:

Do you know how the moments perform their adoration?

Waving its row of lamps, the universe sings in worship day and night.

Kabir is hardly a good enough poet to excite readers whose faith is not say, anything that has not been often said before, nor does he say it in a marvellous sincere way, which is the next best thing. His book is likely to make many friends among religious readers.

2 May, 1915

**THE OBSERVER**

p4c4(S)

### A STUDY OF TAGORE'S LIFE

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE. By Ernest Rhys. (Macmillan.) 5s. net.**

The many lovers of the work of Rabindranath Tagore will welcome this biographical study of him by Mr. Ernest Rhys, for it is written in a spirit of reverent enthusiasm and is full of information that it is good to know. For instance, he gives us an example of Tagore's influence and popularity in India. Mr. Montagu's story of how

When he was riding through an Indian forest at night he came upon a clearing where two or three men sat round a fire: Not being certain of his road, he was glad to dismount and rest his tired horse. Shortly after he had joined the group, a poor-looking, ill-clothed lad came out of the forest and sat down also at the fire. First one of the men sang a song and then another. The boy's turn came, and he

sang a song more beautiful both in words and music than the rest. When asked who had made the song he said that he did not know, "they were singing these songs everywhere." A while after Mr. Montague heard the words and music again, this time in a very different place, and when he asked for the name of the maker of the song he heard for the first time the name of Rabindranath Tagore.

A part only of Tagore's work is available for English readers, and it will surprise many to be told that "critics who know his writings intimately in their original form say that his finest work lies not in his songs or in his plays, but in his short stories." Let us hope that we shall all be given a chance soon of making their acquaintances. Nor is his activity limited to writing. In 1901 he started a forest school at Shanti-niketan. He began with two or three boys, but the school grew so that in four years' time there were sixty, and there are now two hundred. Mr. Rhys has learned some interesting facts about the school's regime from an old boy who was nine years a pupil and is now an undergraduate at Pembroke College, Cambridge. The day begins and ends with music, for "early in the morning at 4.30, a choir of boys go round the school singing songs, and rouse the sleepers up into the beauty and calm of early dawn, and after the day's work a choir of boys again goes round the school singing evening songs."

One of Tagore's chief reasons for visiting England and America was to study Western education, and it is interesting to know that he borrowed the idea of the Junior George Republics, in which the boys govern themselves. At this school "the boys elect a captain every week who sees that order is kept, and the boys have to obey him implicitly. There is a sort of court of justice which sits every night." Mr. Rhys makes a striking comment upon the school-life when he says, "One of the most remarkable effects of the religious spirit in which the school is carried on is that no great distinction exists between the teachers and pupils of Shanti Niketan: all are learners together, all are endeavouring to follow the one rising path."

The interest of the book is heightened by several admirable photographs of Rabindranath, out of which the spirit of the great teacher looks. He was born in 1861; and he was lonely as a little boy and his school-master was cruel to him. There is much suffering on

the face, suffering that has not turned to bitterness, for in spite of his childish unhappiness he could say to a friend of his childhood:

In the morning of autumn I would run into the garden the moment I got up from sleep. A scent of leaves and grass wet with dew seemed to embrace me, and the dawn all tender and fresh with the new-awakened rays of the sun held out its face to me to greet me beneath the trembling vesture of palm-leaves. Nature shut her hands and laughingly asked every day, "What have I got inside?" and nothing seemed impossible

Nor, could the loss of his wife before he was forty, and of his daughter who took her place, or of his youngest son turn him to bitterness or move him from his high aim which was and is, in the words of Mr. Rhys, "The union of nations, the destroying of caste, religious pride, race-hatred and race-prejudice - in a word, the 'Making of Man.' It is, he says, the one problem of the present age, and we must be prepared to go through the martyrdom of sufferings and humiliations till the victory of God in man is achieved.

6 May, 1915

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c2(D)

#### Section: NEW BOOKS

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE, A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY, By Ernest Rhys, 5s. net. London: Macmillan.**

Rabindranath Tagore, son of Devendranath Tagore, who was called in India *Maharshi* or "The Saint", was born at Calcutta in 1861. His family name was known far and wide in India, but it is only within very recent times that he has become known at all in Western lands. His works, however, are steadily being published in English, and the fact that he was the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature a few years ago has served to focus the eye of the reading public on his writings. There is

a welcome, therefore, for his slight interpretative sketches of his life and work. Mr. Rhys makes no claim to exhaustive treatment, but simply deals with the various phases of his subject's development in a sympathetic though somewhat tentative manner. He has a considerable knowledge of and feeling for Indian poetry and gives a useful chapter on the forerunners of Tagore. He takes up in turn the poet's lyrics, plays and short stories and explains his education and enterprises at Shanti Niketan, and his hopes for the future of India. Mr. Rhys's monograph is interesting to read, and is provided with several characteristic photographs of the poet.

7 May, 1915

**THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST**

p4c6(D)

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE\*

This biographical study is more of a study than of a biography. Of Mr. Tagore's poetical genius and philosophy we are able to form a fair opinion from the considerable number of his voluminous works that have already been published in English. But as none of these happens to be an autobiography, we should like to have the deficiency in our knowledge of the man more fully supplied by his biographer. Mr. Rhys does, however, give a certain amount of satisfaction to our curiosity. We learn from him that Rabindranath Tagore belonged to a family the members of which afford a striking example of hereditary genius and talent. As he lost his mother at an early age, and his father was often away, he was a lonely child, and found consolation for his loneliness in his passionate love for nature. "It used to make me mad with joy," he told a friend, "when I saw the clouds come up in the sky one by one... Nature was a kind of loving companion always with me, and always revealing to me some fresh beauty." Thus from the very beginning of his life we see his close affinity to Wordsworth. Like Pope, he lisped in numbers, imitating the old Bengali poets, but his full birth as an original poet began about the eight-

\* Rabindranath Tagore, *A Biographical Study*, by Ernest Rhys, (Macmillan.) 5s net.

centh year, when his "Songs of 'Sunset'" appeared. He married at the age of twenty-three, and was sent to manage the family estate on the banks of the Ganges, where "he came into touch with the real life of the people, and wrote down, hot from the life, tales and parables dealing with their everyday affairs." Here, too, when approaching his fortieth year, he lost his wife, his daughter, and his youngest son. As in the case of Tennyson and Wordsworth, his bereavement appears to have stirred the depths of his soul and given greater power to his genius. He retired from the stewardship of the paternal estate, and henceforth gave himself up entirely to literature, philosophic mediation, and the carrying out of a bold educational experiment that he made in his native province of Bengal. For this enterprise he derived suggestions from two visits that he paid to England and America. Mr. Rhys gives a full and interesting account of the open-air school by which the subject of his biography "sought to develop the idea of a House of peace, a boys' republic, a school-house without a taskmaster to serve as a model of young India." We are told that "early in the morning, at 4.30, a choir of boys go round the school, singing songs, and rouse the sleepers up into the beauty and calm of early morn," from which beginning of the day it may be inferred that there is little likelihood of the system ever being transplanted to our northern clime.

As an Orientalist, and a poet with a tincture of mysticism, Mr. Rhys is well qualified to give a sympathetic exposition of the philosophy of an Indian mystic. But his style is occasionally rather obscure. This obscurity is partly due to the employment of Indian words and of allusions to things and persons strange to the general reading public. For instance, he frequently calls Mr. Tagore's father the Maharshi, but does not tell us what a Maharshi is. He describes the "Gitanjali" as "a book of song whose pages are tinged with a light like the sky shown to Zarathustra," and illustrates the difficulty of explaining the "True incidence of song" by reference to the impossibility of making "an unmusical ear delight in 'Aderyn Pur' of the original air of Lhude Sing Cuccu.'" Considering how few of us know anything about the sky shown to Zarathustra, or "Aderyn Pur," or the air of the cuckoo song, such explanations seem to commit the fault of explaining *obscurum per obscurus*. In-

deed, Mr. Tagore's view of the universe and the relation of God and man is more clearly expressed in his own lucid English prose in the "Sadhana" than in the pages of his biographer. It is the Indian pantheism which has its analogues in Virgil's soul of the universe and in Wordsworth's "something more divinely interfused whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean, and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of man." To this he adds a recognition of love as the pervading spirit of the universe, on the strength of which he holds as firmly as Pope the optimistic doctrine that whatever is is right, a conviction which must surely be difficult to maintain amid the horrors of a great war.

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8 May, 1915

#### THE ATHENAEUM

p420-421(W)

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE: A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

By Ernest Rhys. (Macmillan & Co., 5s. net.)

In calling his work a biographical study Mr. Rhys raises hopes which he does not satisfy. The broad facts of Mr. Tagore's background -- that he is a native of Bengal, belongs to a very wealthy Brahman family much addicted to the arts, is the son of the Maharshi or Saint, Devendranath who founded the reformed church known as the Brahmo Samaj, and himself enjoys a wide popular reputation in India, not only as a poet, but also as a religious teacher -- all this is well known. We learn from Mr. Rhys a few further details. Mr. Tagore was married at the age of twentythree, and for the seventeen years following his marriage managed the family estates at Shilaida on the banks of the Ganges. "Here he came into touch with the real life of the people, and wrote down, hot from the life, tales and parables dealing with their everyday affairs." We wish his biographer had taken the hint. What, we wonder, are the duties and responsibilities of such a manager on an Indian estate? What would we not give to be able to picture the great man in the daily scenes among which the most vivid and the most formative scenes of his young

manhood were passed! Mr. Rhys attempts nothing of the kind. We learn only that at the end of this period "he lost his beloved wife; then within a very few months, from consumption, the daughter who took her place; and then his youngest son." It would have been of interest to know, in relation to a family so remarkable as the Tagores and an individual member of it so distinguished as Rabindranath, something more about this marriage than the bare facts that it began and ended. It is sad to learn that two of the children who were its issue died, and that so many blows fell upon the poet in such a quick succession; but it disturbs us in the midst of our sympathy to reflect that it is only by inference - by a word let fall, it may be accidentally, in the record of these deaths - that we discern that two sons of the poet are still living; they are nowhere directly mentioned.

Perhaps this is in accordance with Indian sentiment when the personality of a great man is under review. But it does not accord in the least with what is understood in this country as biography. In reviewing the Autobiography of the Maharshi, Rabindranath's father, we were led to observe that judging it from our Western standpoint, we found it lacking in just that sort of everyday detail which would have enabled us, more than anything else, to feel the writer's saintliness. But although to Devendranath his family meant less than it could have done to any corresponding Englishman, and though, if our memory serve us, he left his wife at one period to live for several years as a mountain hermit, his household was, however superficially presented, made known to the reader of the Autobiography. Yet here Mr. Rhys, in what he calls a "biographical study", disposes of Rabindranath's seventeen years of family life in two paragraphs and does not so much as acquaint us with the names of his wife and children.

The period of family life and estate management, the "Shalaida" period, produced 'The Gardener' (the first to be written of the poems hitherto translated) and a number of prose tales at present little known in this country. It was preceded by the "Calcutta" period, when "aerial phantasms and drowsy enchantments, memories of days of fancy and fire, ghostly visitings and flashes of Maenad-like inspiration," came "floating to the poet's soul," winning for him a comparison with Keats, and

enabling him to lift Bengali poetry "to the height of neo-romanticism." It was followed by the period of mature practical activity and contemplative study which saw the foundation of India's first public school, the Shantiniketan or Abode of Peace, and the composition of *Gitanjali*.

Mr. Rhys gives us a charming, but again a very slight picture of the famous school and of the atmosphere thrown about it by Mr. Tagore's presence and influence; but he is really occupied not with a biographical, but with a literary estimate. The beauty and surprise of the *Gitanjali* made a deep impression upon him as upon my other Englishmen; and he subsequently felt more immediately, as well he might, the great spell of its author's personality. But the effect was, if he will pardon our saying so, a certain loss of proportion, a certain paralysis of judgment before the trance, the mirage of the East. His desire to acknowledge fully the virtue and beauty of the revelation Mr. Tagore brings has led him to forget much which, in our view, it specially behoves a Western critic to remember. He moralises, in a short preface, upon the disaster of war by which Europe is shaken, and intimates that, if we could throw off materialism and live with the contemplative and poetic Brahmins, such tragedies might be avoidable. No one can be more anxious than ourselves to see such a development of human civilization as may leave war among the hideous memories of the past; but for that reason we must deplore facile misapprehensions of the issue like this which Mr. Rhys's attitude implies. It is not difficult matter for a few thousand persons in a population of two hundred and fifty millions to wash their hands of material care, to be superior to the claims of the finite, and to live a Tolstoyan life oblivious of earthly ties. It is as easy to do this as to write a biographical study of a married man without mentioning his wife and children; and it is the same sort of achievement. Such a life has many beautiful aspects; it admits of a refinement, a stillness an intensification, seldom compassed under the stirring and conflicting influences of the West. But Western civilization is based upon the admitted existence of wife and child; and the history of the East shows conclusively that affected unawareness of these factors always fails even in what it sets out to accomplish. The material world breaks in, with dire consequences,

upon those who would attempt to banish it. The strength of the West lies in its recognition of the primary fact that the human spirit, as we know it here, is wedded to the clay, and advances only by accepting all the terms of the bond. Thus war is, indeed, terrible and grievous; but it is nobler to acknowledge your wife and fight for her than to ignore her in the mistaken hope that she will leave you in peace.

We venture upon these remarks because we are anxious that the great and deserved influence which the beauty of Mr. Tagore's writing has given him in this country should not lead to misunderstanding and the inevitable reaction consequent upon it. He has done more than any one else in his generation to awaken in England the widespread interest in Indian life which is indispensable to us if we are to fulfil our growing responsibilities to that great Empire. Yet our responsibilities do not really demand from us the worship of India's saints, or even of her poets so much as the rescuing and redeeming of the great mass of her population, with provision for them, in the first place, of the material essential to civilised life. Before this colossal problem the wisdom of the East has been proved powerless; and we can only brace ourselves to our task so long as we remember that our own civilization patent as its defects may be, is an advance on theirs: that we are attempting to do for ourselves and for them also what they can only not be said to have failed in., because they have, in fact, not seen so much as the possibility of attempting it. We admire Mr. Tagore greatly, as an artist to whose voice the world listens, and as one who is already bringing to his fellow-countrymen, as none but a great poet can do, the need of certain ideas on which Western life is founded, and which Eastern life has on the whole overlooked. It is because he is nearer to ourselves than other Indian poets are that he has so deeply touched us, and we have the right to say that, if he is nearer to us, it is because he has, by conscious and unconscious processes, assimilated something of our standards and of the spirit of our literature.

Many of his readers, even of his English readers, are probably unaware that the essence of what he has to say has been said, and more fruitfully said, by Wordsworth - more fruitfully because in wider and more worldly contexts, with less mystification and more of easy humanity. The province

of the English critic in regard to Mr. Tagore's work is, we fancy, to explain this to recognise also and guard against the lure of apparent simplicity, of the mysterious, the unknown, and to lay a solid basis for intelligent and lasting appreciation.

Mr. Rhys seems to us to have preferred to heighten the lustre of the halo which has been cast about Mr. Tagore by English sentimentalists, and which, though it does not exaggerate, distorts and obscures his true proportions.

8 May, 1915

### THE FIELD, THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN'S NEWSPAPER

p808(W)

### THE WRITINGS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ERNEST RHYS'S biographical study of *Rabindranath Tagore* (Macmillan and Co.; 5s. net) will be especially appreciated by those who had the pleasure of the famous Indian poet's acquaintance during his visit to this country in 1912 and 1913. It is well done. Indeed, in several of the descriptions it might almost be imagined that the poet had imparted some of his melody to the biographer. Then the element of enthusiasm is discernible throughout, and this makes the book one of exceedingly pleasant character. "When we take," writes Mr Rhys, "one of those love songs of *The Gardener*, in which the lyrist sings naturally as the first blackbird in spring, we are aware of an older music than that declared in the open notes. The emotion of a thousand springs enjoyed before that particular morning is in them, echoing cadences that were heard in the hymns of the Vedas a thousand years ago. If we turn from those lyric pages to *Sadhana* we find that it too quickens immemorial ideas in its pages. It expresses the Indian mind under new religious forms, more constructive, more intelligible to us than the old; and after pausing to make us feel the habitual difference between East and West, it goes on to point the way to a common deliverance and a spiritual commonwealth." Besides the two mentioned in the quoted passage, quite a number of Tagore's works are known to English

readers, who will in all probability agree that he writes "with faith in his audience and in its cordial delight in what he sings; his music flows freely because there are eager listeners waiting to accept and to rejoice in his song; and this we discover, as we look back into the history of Bengali literature, comes of the propitious custom of the country." Some reference is made to all of these works, and passages quoted and commented upon, while the author briefly reviews a few of the short stories which some critics ever show, in their original form, the finest of Tagore's efforts. The life of the poet is succinctly sketched and an admirable picture drawn of the school at Shanti Niketan, in the conduct of which Tagore takes the principal part. The illustrations include three portraits of the poet and two autograph poems.

8 May, 1915

**THE NATION**

p186(W)

### THE INDIAN POET

**"Rabindranath Tagore. A Biographical Study." By ERNEST RHYS. (Macmillan. 5s. net.)**

It is a bold undertaking to write a book like this in these times. If ever there was a man whose life and work stood in direct opposition to the one absorbing interest which occupies all minds in Europe and this country, it is Rabindranath Tagore. All who care for genuine poetry and a deep purity of thought have known him since he suddenly became famous some two years ago. They have known him as a contemplative poet of very attractive personality - all the more attractive because he brought with him a quality of peace and restful harmony for which, even in peace time, one may search through Europe in vain. It is a quality that belongs to the Sanyasis or devout ascetics of Hindustan, and has its dwelling in cities beside holy rivers or in remote valleys of the Himalaya. But what place has it among the smoke and turmoil of our manufacturing towns, among the self-seeking ambitions of Parliamentary and professional careers, or in the bloody entrenchments of international hate?

After reading that characteristic European book, "Jean Christophe," we are told that Rabindranath observed:-

"You people over here seem to me to be all in a state of continual strife. It is all struggling, hard striving to live. There is no place for rest, or peace of mind, or that meditative relief which in our country we feel to be needed for the health of our spirits"

Equally at variance with the spirit which now rages through Western civilization is a passage in the "Sadhana", his book of more directly religious meditation.

"Whenever some ancient civilization fell into decay and died, it was owing to causes which produced callousness of heart, and led to the cheapening of man's worth; when either the State or some powerful group of men began to look upon the people as a mere instrument of their power; when by compelling weaker races to slavery and trying to keep them down by every means, man struck at the foundation of his greatness. Civilization can never sustain itself upon cannibalism of any form"

In those sentences the perils surrounding, not only German, but all Imperial and exploiting systems, are revealed, and this defiance of our current conceptions as to material wealth and progress is implied in the very spirit of Rabindranath's view of life. That is why we think Mr. Rhys bold in his undertaking, especially in these times when every motive which Rabindranath defies may seem to triumph. He is bold, but for that reason the more to be praised; for he has excellently accomplished the task, and there will be some who will fly to these aspects of lasting truth and spiritual peace as to a city of refuge. The book is rather an exposition or study of the poet's translated works (translated, that is, from his own Bengali into English by himself) than a strict biography. For, indeed, the outward events of such a life are few, and the spiritual growth is all that matters much.

Yet we welcome every little fact about his ordinary life, just as we welcomed some account of common Hindu existence in the Autobiography of his father, Devendranath, one of the leaders in the purifying or reforming movement known as the Brahmo-Samaj. A detailed picture of the poet's daily life in

childhood, youth, and manhood would be of great interest. All the more because what distinguishes Rabindranath from the usual type of Hindu ascetic is that he has never separated himself from human life in his meditation, nor does he advocate the mountain hermitage or the devout beggar's existence in the dust. Many noble Hindus take the saffron robe of pilgrim meditation only when they quit the world of affairs. But followers of Rabindranath may wear the saffron robe of the spirit in the midst of a busy life, and the poet himself, instead of inhabiting a desert solitude, keeps a school of 200 boys. He is like the Greek philosopher who defined the highest happiness as contemplation, but did not restrict contemplation to the last years of life or exclude it from the common business of the world. As Mr. Rhys says, the path which Rabindranath shows us is not trodden by the Sanyasi or ascetic alone, but is one which every man may tread on his way to the first gate of mortality.

Standing as he does between East and West, this Bengali poet is quite aware of the Hindu's defect. As his biographer shows, he has pointed this out in his book of "Sadhana," of meditations:

"In India the danger comes from the want of outward activity. Her thinkers despise the fields of power and of extension. Their intellect in its attempt to realize Brahma 'works itself stone-dry,' and their heart, seeking to confine him within its own outpourings, turns to emotion and neglects the stern bonds of law and the discipline of the real."

Readers of the "Gitanjali" (his finest poems) will remember that strangely beautiful poem (52) in which the woman (or the soul) finds in the morning that her divine lover has left for his gift of love, not a rose-wreath or a vase of perfumed water, but his mighty sword. "From now," cries the woman (or the soul):-

"From now I leave off all petty decorations. Lord of my heart, no more shall there be for me waiting and weeping in corners, no more coyness and sweetness of demeanour. Thou hast given me thy sword for adornment. No more doll's decorations for me!"

How splendid a vow for any woman or any soul!

10 May, 1915

**PALL MALL GAZETTE**

p4c4(DE)

### A BENGALI POET

**"Rabindranath Tagore". By Ernest Rhys (Macmillan.) 5s. net.**

When one reads at the end of this "Biographical Study" that Tagore "is of us and has felt our passions and appetites, he has known the love of man and woman, sons and daughters, and small children," one heaves a sigh of relief. For Mr. Rhys is a whole-hearted admirer of the Indian poet. His book is neither a study nor a biography, but a song of unrestrained and uncritical eulogy. Much of it must be quite unintelligible to sects, such as Brahmo-Samaj, nor of its obvious connection with Christian missions, nor of its debt generally to Western civilisation. Some of us find it difficult to take Tagore seriously as an Eastern poet. His verse recalls Western models and masters and ways thought too thoroughly. This is not to say that he is not typical of a certain section of modern India, it is merely to say that India is in some degree becoming Westernised. Mr. Rhys quotes gravely his hero's distress at the rush of modern life, and no doubt, like other poets, Tagore has a good deal to teach a world over obvious gifts; and this may become clearer when his admirers have ceased cleaning for him the position of great philosopher

15 May, 1915

**THE LIVERPOOL DAILY POST AND MERCURY**

p7c1(D)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

'Midst the woes of woman suffrage,  
In the throes of wanton war,  
There's a certain soothing something  
In Rabindranath Tagore.

He has such a soulful profile,  
And his hair curls so galore.  
And the eyes are so appealing  
Of Rabindranath Tagore.

Then the words he manufactures,  
 Some we may have heard before.  
 But how deftly he emits them -  
 Does Rabindranath Tagore.

He selects a muddy pavement,  
 A small child, an open door,  
 A banana or a lemon,  
 Does Rabindranath Tagore.  
 A plain cow or pig, a glow-worm,  
 And some humdrum daily chore,  
 Then behold, a thrilling proselet  
 By Rabindranath Tagore.  
 Where the snow-capped Himalayas  
 Through the sun-baked valleys pour  
 The wide waters of the Ganges  
 Dwells Rabindranath Tagore.

And I sometimes sit and wonder  
 If in proud Chicago's roar  
 He'd been raised and got his schooling -  
 Had Rabindranath Tagore -

And his name had been quite different,  
 Would his poetry be a bore -  
 If, for instance, he'd been christened  
 Well - say, Hezekiah Gore.'

—

19 May, 1915

### THE DAILY CHRONICLE

p4c3(D)

### THE LIGHT OF INDIA

### TAGORE AS THE MAN AND THE IDEALIST

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE: A Biographical Study,**  
 by Ernest Rhys, London, Macmillan, 5s. net.

By C. F. Lawrence

Mr. Rhys has written an eminently valuable little book. The poems of Rabindranath Tagore have won their way to appreciation, but it was necessary

still for them - as it was for the aims and personality of their writer - to be introduced and explained, their purposes and message being so different from, yet so essential to, what is called Western culture. Briefly and lucidly - insufficiently, doubtless, also; but that is a deficiency we all can remedy in the best and proper way - Mr. Rhys has described the man with something of the written and social work he has done and is doing.

### The Time Ripe

It was, indeed, high time for such a seer and healer as Rabindranath Tagore to minister unto us. The European world was growing sick with insincerities. Then the war came - we can justly in this connection say, fortunately it came - as a furious reminder of the realities - the bases of all ideals - which in the days of negligence and prosperity we were forgetting. The materialism of Europe - which has broken in its worst form in the war and canting blackguardism of Prussian - was far too rife in England before the red purge came. Before the war we saw luxury and freakishness, road-hogging and frolicking, while in slums and other forgotten places there was an ugly and a devastating poverty that rebuked the Empire. In our vulgar satisfaction we had forgotten; and rot had set in. It was, then, in the midst of the glistening and vulgar riot that a gentle voice came from the East; and it is a hopeful fact that the poems and the personality of Rabindranath Tagore claimed some attention, but only among the cultured and thoughtful few. Something more insistent than the still small voice was requisite to wake the Western countries to the underlying truths; and even among those of prepared minds and gentle dispositions, the effect of Tagore's writings was rather of curiosity than of acceptance. It was their aesthetic rather than their moral appeal that was discussed and considered; whereas, this book reminds us, Tagore is more than an aesthetic and a poet. He is a reformer with a mission to the world, and a healer too.

### Waiting for Ideals

When peace comes, provided it is true peace and not an agreed pause before the renewal of storm, the world will have so changed that it will be ready

for ideals. The actualities of hideousness will, it is to be hoped, be found condemned and sentenced, leaving a free call and occasion to new and beautiful purposes. It is then that this message from the East should be considered, and the materialism which has formed the foundation of Western prosperity modified, if not destroyed. We can see now that the heated quest of dross and dividends which has left this person over-rich and that person over-poor has been at best an extraordinary folly. What can it profit a man if he gain the whole world – and leave his sister on the streets, his brother in the slums? Yet the Western world has been blind to all that, and been selling its soul for a swollen bank-balance and a parade of titles.

What Rabindranath Tagore has to say and do – for his school at Shanti Niketan is an example, and should be a correction, to our materialistic system of education – is in flat contradiction to our mechanical aims. To win more response, to bring more beauty into the normal life, to relegate conventional standards to their proper values, to realise that happiness and enjoyment are not the consequences of social shove, to know that joy is not a merely selfish experience, but is linked and bound with the welfare of others, these are but some of the truths that must be kept in mind and in practice. And there are further aims still:

The union of nations, the destroying of caste, religious pride, race-hatred, and race-prejudice – in a word, the “Making of Man”; there lies his human aim. “It is,” he says, “the one problem of the present age, and we must be prepared to go through the martyrdom of sufferings and humiliations till the victory of God in man achieved.”

### **Avoid the Pit.**

No light programme this for reformers. Reformers? – nay, we must reform the reformers also, or we shall be back in that pit of sordidness, selfishness and snobbery, out of which the war-quickened ideals have opportunely raised us. Reform has been almost entirely an affair of material benefit – very good and urgently necessary, no doubt; but only a part, and the lesser part, of the great necessity of these days. The official religions which exist to help with the ideals seem rather to have lost their way. It would be insufficient to treat

Rabindranath Tagore as though he were only a practical idealist. He is also a poet, a playwright, and a story-teller. As yet only one tenth of his work has been done into English, and that chiefly the poetry. He has rightly won high place as a poet; the vision and the mysticism must have lost through being expressed in a foreign language; yet how welcome and refreshing are the glimpses it gives of the beauty of life, the immortality of Nature, the inspiration of love and the awe in the heart of man for the truths of the powers that are eternal. It gives rhythmic expression to the thoughts of a sweet singer. In this book Mr. Rhys shows us rather Tagore poetry being only one aspect of a genius with many sides: yet it is from his poetry that England may best be influenced, and we can feel proud that it is under the strong shield of our Empire that the genius of this Bengali singer has found itself and flourished.

*31 May, 1915*

**THE WESTERN DAILY PRESS**

p7c3(D)

### **TAGORE**

“Rabindranath Tagore” is a biographical study, by Ernest Rhys, of this well-known Indian poet. Dealing lightly and briefly with the main facts of the poet’s life, it passes into an appreciation of his songs, plays and short stories. Mr. Rhys is a sympathetic commentator. His hero is far more to him than a poet. He is a religious teacher. He wields a spiritual influence, and exercises a spiritual authority. He is one of the true leaders of India – nay, of mankind. Mr. Rhys recalls the prophetic insight with which, on a visit to London, he seemed to anticipate the war: “He spoke with alarm of the temper of the great nations and the life of the great cities like Paris and London, whose love of luxury, need of sensation, and craving for excitement were up against every finer instinct he cherished... major energies, as he viewed them, were not constructive; they did not make for world’s commonwealth, and by their nature they must come into conflict sooner or later”. His own teaching is that “Man’s freedom and his fulfilment were not to be gained

through war and the argument of the strong hand, but by love", Mr. Rhys is perfectly entitled to contrast this with the latest word of German philosophy. "It is not enough to love your country. You must love it in full armour. Everything that is not it must be hated. Hate is sacred". Mr. Tagore is no orthodox Hindu, but a follower of Brahmo Somaj, which is a spiritual faith, aiming at universality and as much indebted to Christianity as to Hinduism. The book is enriched by a number of illustrations, including several portraits of its subject. Messers Macmillan and Co. are the publishers.

1 June, 1915

**THE STANDARD**

p3c2(D)

#### **Section: THE NEWEST BOOKS**

##### **AN INDIAN POET**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE: a Biographical Study, by Ernest Rhys. Illustrated. (Macmillan and Co. 5s.)**

This volume fails, to some extent, to live up to its title. It is not a biographical study, for it tells us remarkably little about the attractive personality and actual events which have marked the life of a representative poet, dramatist, and story-teller of the East. If Mr. Ernest Rhys had called his monograph an appreciation of Rabindranath Tagore the title would have been more appropriate, though even then we should have been forced to add that its prevailing note was complimentary rather than critical. Mr. Rhys seems to have surrendered at discretion to the rich, subtle, imaginative appeal of an Oriental mind, mystical in outlook, or moral delicacy and literary charm. There is no question whatever that Tagore is at once a poet and a seer of lofty ideals and deft literary craftsmanship. He has caught in glowing prose and verse, some of the noblest aspects of the ancient civilisation in which he was born, and which we, as a people, are only beginning to understand. But it is possible to admit the haunting beauty of many of his utterances without failing to discover in anything he has written much more than pretty conceits and

high-flown similes. It is, in short, the paucity of ideas, whether compelling or constructive, in this glitter of word painting which proves disconcerting. The intellectual qualities of Tagore seem to us to represent with tolerable accuracy in Eastern guise those of the greatly belauded, but now forgotten, effusions of the late Martin Tupper in his "Proverbial Philosophy"; but we hasten to add that Tagore, in spite of his limitations, is a poet – a distinction to which Martin Tupper could make no claim. This, of course, will be regarded as rank heresy by Mr. Ernest Rhys, but really we are compelled to add that Tagore has been unduly extolled by a small, but persistent, group of western critics, captured probably by the note of austere aloofness which dominates the man quite as much as his writings. We are quite prepared to admit that Tagore is an idealist of vision, with eternity in his heart and the love of beauty in his eyes. But in spite of his drowsy enchantments and the manner in which he holds the mirror up with enviable art to the immemorial wisdom of the East, we are not prepared to accept him with the ecstasy which weakens this attempt by Mr. Ernest Rhys to show forth his praise. Perhaps the most interesting passages in the book are those which relate to Tagore's open-air school at Shanti Niketan – the abode of peace; a practical movement the outcome of which all who realise the importance of ethical culture in India are certain to follow with sympathy. The book contains portraits and not a few aids to the interpretation of Tagore's message to the modern world.

3 June, 1915

**THE DAILY MAIL**

p5-6c1(D)

#### **EMPIRE KNIGHTS**

##### **MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND DR. GHOSE**

Knighthoods have been conferred, among others, on two distinguished Indians, the poet Rabindranath Tagore, Bengal and Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Pleader.

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, who is 54 years of age, was introduced by Mr. W. B. Yeats to the

reading public of this country as the author of two or three slim volumes of delicate verse. In India Mr. Tagore is a prophet as well as a poet and a school master. He founded a school at Shantiniketan, Bolpur, Bengal. This has been his life's work. Mr. Tagore translates his own works. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.

Dr. Ghose's patriotism is now fittingly rewarded.

3 June, 1915  
**THE TIMES**  
 p10c4(D)

### KNIGHTHOODS

The King has been graciously pleased to confer the honour of knighthood upon –

M. Justice WILLIAM BOCK AYLING, I.C.S.,  
 A Puisne Judge of the High Court of Judicature, Fort St. George, Madras.

RUTHVEN GREY MONTEATH, Esq.,  
 Senior resident partner, Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie, and Co., Calcutta, and lately an Additional Member of the Council of the Governor General for making Laws and Regulations.

Dr. RASH BEHARI GHOSE, C.S.I., C.I.E., D.L.,  
 Pleader, High Court of Judicature at Fort William, Bengal.

Mr. Justice JOHN GEORGE WOODROFFE,  
 Barrister-at-law. A Puisne Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Fort William, Bengal.

HENRY LEGARD, Esq.,  
 Partner in the firm of Cooper, Allen, and Co., Cawnpore, President of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, for making Laws and Regulations.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE, Esq., Of Bolpur, Bengal.

ROBERT RICHARD GALES, Esq., A.M.I.C.E., F.C.II.

Indian Public Works Department, Engineer-in-Chief, Hardinge Bridge, Sara, Bengal.

HAJI MUHAMMAD YUSUF,

A prominent Musulman gentleman of Bombay\*

3 June. 1915

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**  
 p185(W)

### THE "ABODE OF PEACE"

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE: a Biographical Study.**  
 By ERNEST RHYS. (Macmillan, 5s. net.)

While the world is filled with the noise of war, there is still in far Bengal a place which bears the name "Abode of Peace". There the man, whom London knew two years ago as a quietly observant stranger, a figure dignified and long-bearded, more like the ancient sages of Greece, as the monuments show them, than anything we know in the modern world, still presides over his little company of white-robed boys and makes new songs for them to sing in the shadow of the garden trees or first light of an Indian dawn. Two years ago in this Europe which is now convulsed in internecine strife, the name of Rabindranath Tagore was on the lips of many – in Germany, one hears, no less than in England. And even now the name may come up in our minds as a memorial of things that remain, quiet and lovely and eternal, through all the shattering tumult. Sooner or later, no doubt, our European world will want to know more of this man who has touched its soul with a new note in poetry – a note, at any rate, which broke as something novel and unfamiliar upon our literary tradition. The man's own books will always be the best and real revelation of what he is: perhaps there are few poets of whom it is more difficult to speak without doing justice to his personality, since it is almost inevitable that

\*The Honours list was published in all national dailies of June 3, 1915 and was more or less in the same format.

in trying to speak of him we steep his figure in a literary atmosphere, whilst it is the child-like unselfconsciousness, the simplicity and freshness and directness, which are part of the essential quality of his poetry. Yet, with all this, the public is no doubt right in desiring to learn what relation a poet's poetry bears to the whole context of his human life, and those who write *Lives of the Poets* are doing a service for which we ought to be grateful.

As an instalment, Mr. Ernest Rhys's little book may be welcomed. It is too sketchy and discursive to count as a biography; it is rather talk about the man and his works with bits of biographical information thrown in. Mr. Rhys writes of his subject with a mild fervour and a facile literary pen. And one may safely say that most English readers, having read the little book, will know more than they did of the natural background and environment of Tagore's work and its relation to the literary tradition of Bengal; they will also understand better how the phases of Tagore's poetry correspond with the vicissitudes of his life and the place which his literary work has among his other interests and activities. But there are some things which even in so slight a sketch as this one is surprised to find omitted; explanation, for instance, of the peculiar position which the Tagore family has held in Bengal, of the characteristics which distinguish it. Mr. Rhys's account of the school at Bolpur the "Abode of Peace", will be especially useful in bringing before English readers the manysidedness of Rabindranath Tagore. The man some people probably were inclined to think of as living in a world of beautiful dreams is here shown as a practical educationist, a reformer and experimenter, careful to gather whatever suggestions of value there may be in European educational experiments. The peculiar principle of self-government which characterizes the school was apparently suggested in the first instance by the George Junior Republic of America. And yet the school is as far as possible from being an incongruous reproduction of Western models under Indian conditions. The school is thoroughly Indian in character and tradition, showing the mind of its organizer to be equally removed from the narrow Nationalism which refuses to look out-

side India for instruction and from the unlovely snobbishness which is eager to imitate everything Western uncritically and wholesale.

In his treatment of Rabindranath's works and philosophy of life Mr. Rhys says a large number of the obvious things, but he says them gracefully enough. What determines his point of view is, one gathers, the common, and somewhat superficial, idea which contrasts the West, as a world unrestfully struggling for material riches, with an East conceived as having inherited an unchanging secret of peace. What such an idea fails to comprehend is that the unrest and struggle in the West is due to its having a much harder spiritual problem before it. The struggle to attain that peace, which in the harmonious co-ordination of all the elements in life is harder according as the elements dealt with are richer and more complex; and in the West the advances of Rationalistic Science with the consequent increased command over all material means and a more realistic intellectual grasp of human history and human nature have thrown upon us a mass of problems which lay outside the horizon of the East till modern times. It was easier in the ancient East to harmonize the elements of life, when the elements were fewer and poorer and simpler. The West has a harder problem, but its success, in so far as it succeeds, is proportionately richer. Again, when we turn to the East it is far from true that it has reached a finally satisfactory solution of the problem of life. Through Mr. Rhys's pages one can only faintly perceive the spiritual struggle and travail going on in India to day. And yet this is what largely gives its significance to the figure of Rabindranath Tagore. The atmosphere of the home in which he grew up was a reforming one. His father, the Maharshi, represented a movement of strong ethical protest against elements in the current tradition against the Pantheism which tends inevitably to moral softness, and against Hindu image worship, with all that it implies. And yet in the fervent Vaishnavite religion, with its passionate devotion to an incarnate god, however much in some of its forms it might become morally confused and degraded, there seemed to be something which the severer Unitarian Brahmo religion tended to lose. Through such oppositions modern India is feeling its way. And to understand Rabindranath in his historical con-

text one must see him as one whose aim is to combine the Vaishnavite fervour with the moral strength and reforming zeal of the Maharshi. Whether his philosophy of life offers a finally adequate basis for the reconciliation of those diverse elements may be questioned. But meantime the quest of modern India is of profound human interest and the figure of Rabindranath stands there as that of a man who with the noble simplicity and humility of genius speaks of that which he knows and testifies that which he has seen.

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4 June, 1915

**THE BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE**

p4c5(D)

**AN INDIAN KNIGHT**

**LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

No award in yesterday's Honours List was worthier than the knighthood given to Rabindranath Tagore, the great and gracious Bengal writer described by one of the Viceroys as the "Poet Laureate of Asia". He was awarded the distinguished Nobel Prize for literature. Mr. Tagore visited London in 1912 and was entertained at a banquet.

In Chaucer's word he is in sooth "a very perfect gentil knight," and there should be an increased demand for the lessons of life and character to be found in the recent biographical impression by Mr. Ernest Rhys.

A tender, wistful, handsome face looks out of the photographs of this quietest Indian poet and schoolmaster in this fascinating study of his life and personality. There is a good deal of the practical mystic in Tagore's character, despite the aloofness of his writings from the harsh pursuits of the modern world. And thus not the least variable of Mr. Rhys' interpretative analysis of the man and the poet is the story of his Tagore's school founded in 1921 as a model community ran on commonwealth lines in a spirit of religious quietism.

**A Model School**

Music is one of the chief agents :

"Early in the morning, at 4.30, a choir of boys go round the school singing songs, and rouse the sleepers up into the beauty and calm of early dawn and after the day's work a choir of boys again goes round the school singing evening songs" "The boys elect a captain every week who sees that order is kept, and the boys have to obey him implicitly.. There is a sort of court of justice which sits every night "

Speaking of the religious influence, Mr. Rhys says:

"One of the most remarkable effects of the religious spirit in which the school is carried on is that no great distinction exists between the teachers and pupils of Shanti Niketan: all are learners together, all are endeavouring to follow the one rising path."

We learn that the look of resigned suffering which gives beauty to the face of Tagore began with loneliness as a boy and unhappy school days, and that fate filled the cup of sorrow later by the death of his wife, daughter, and youngest son.

**A World Message**

There could not be more suitable reading for our times of woe than this record of gentle patience under personal sorrow, and the teaching of the larger humanity under national shock and shifting landmarks. For the gospel of Tagore is summed up the union of nations, the destroying of caste, religious pride, race hatred, and race prejudice - in a word, the "making of man"; and he has striven by precept and practice to exhibit those ideals to the Western world which holds the East in fee!\*

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\*"Rabindranath Tagore". By Ernest Rhys (Macmillan.) 5s.

4 June, 1915

**THE NORTHERN WHIG**

p11cl(D)

**Section: LITERATURE**

**"Rabindranath Tagore: a Biographical Study". By Ernest Rhys. (London; Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 5s. net.)**

[The following report is similar to the report published in "The Scotsman" on 6 May, 1915 with minor alteration]

The subject of this volume, the son of Devendranath Tagore, who was known throughout India as "The Saint", was born at Calcutta in 1861. Although his family name was a household word in India, it is only within recent years that it has become known at all in the Western world. His works, however, are gradually being circulated in English on an extensive scale, and the fact that he was made the recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature a few years ago has not only served to attract the attention of the reading public to his writings but is a guarantee of his literary significance. The interesting sketch, which interprets his life and work, is therefore assured of a cordial welcome. It makes no claim to exhaustive treatment, but the author sets out all the salient facts and deals with the various phases of his subject's development in a sympathetic and thoroughly adequate manner. The book reveals the author's familiarity with and feeling for Indian poetry, and it contains a useful chapter on the literary forerunners of Tagore. It deals in turn with the poet's lyrics, plays, and short-stories, and explains his educational enterprises at Shanti

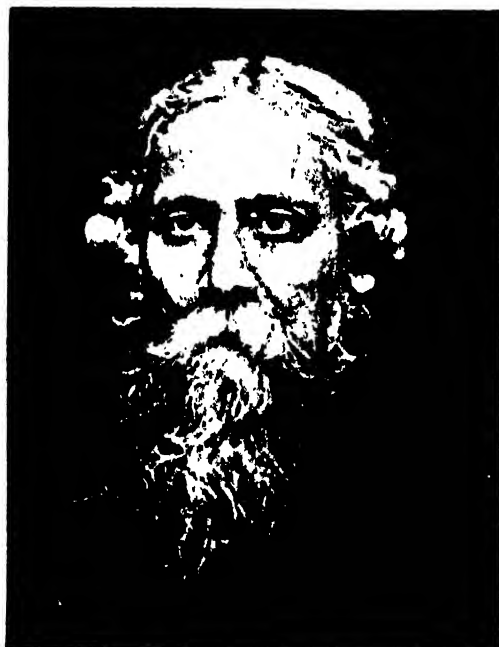
Niketan and his aspirations for the future of his native country. The monograph is an admirable revelation of a most interesting personality, and the text is supplemented by several characteristic photographs of the poet.

5 June, 1915

**THE ATHENÆUM**

p509(W)

[This is a long article from which the relevant opening paragraph is reprinted below.]



RABINDRANATH TAGORE.  
*The Indian poet who has been knighted*  
*Photos by E. Taft and Fig. R. Haines, and L. Connell Smith*

**Fig. 24 The Ladies Field**  
12 June 1915, p84

**LITERARY GOSSIP**

The list of Birthday Honours issued last Thursday is naturally of a special character, and appropriately headed by the Garter awarded to Lord Kitchner. The world of literature and journalism are represented in the baronetcy of Sir Gilbert Parker and Sir Henry Norman, and the knighthood of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore and Mr. L. Chiozza Money. Dr. William Peterson, the Principal of McGill university, who becomes a K.C.M.G., is well known for his work in education and in Latin scholarship. We noticed his excellent 'Canadian Essays and Addresses' last February.

12 June, 1915

**THE LADIES' FIELD**

p84(W)

**The Bengal Poet a Knight**

MR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE, the Bengal Poet, is the third of his name to receive the honour of knighthood, the others being the Maharaja Sir

Prodyot Tagore, who represented the city of Calcutta at the coronation of King Edward, and Raja Sir Sourindro Tagore, who has done great work for Hindu music. Sir Rabindranath was first made known to poetry lovers in this country by that excellent judge of poetical merit, Mr. W.B. Yeats, and his all too few but infinitely delightful and imaginative volumes of verse have become cherished possessions of the connoisseur.

The poet is the translator of his own works, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. In India he has devoted his life to the founding and conducting of a school at Bolpur, and his name among his own people is revered as that of a prophet.

26 June, 1915

# THE SPECTATOR

p871-872(W)

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Mr. RHYS is himself a poet, acquainted with the joys and perils of poetical composition, easily aroused to enthusiasm by a charming and attractive personality. Rabindranath Tagore not only is but looks a poet. He is not only master of a subtle and suggestive style in two languages, but is, as his short stories show, a humorist with a keen sense of fun. He is, in fact, a Bengali of genius who inherits an instinctive sense of form and proportion in manners as well as in literary expression. It is the more to be regretted that Mr. Rhys has allowed his excusable enthusiasm for his subject to carry him a little beyond the limits of sober criticism. For example, he says:

"Since this book was written things have happened which have sadly changed our perspective; and they serve to recall a day, before the faintest shadow had fallen, when this visitor from India, lying ill in London, scanned the omens and read them very uneasily."

If this only meant that Rabindranath Tagore, a shrewd observer of men like most of his coun-

trymen, foresaw the coming of war, there would be nothing more to say. But are we to draw a distressing comparison between Christians at war and Bengalis philosophizing and poetizing at peace, because Bengal is not as Belgium? Are we, looking at desolated Europe, to admit that "the ancient civilization of India had another ideal, which as that of the perfect comprehension of all, the inclusion of every element in the universe, and not the shutting out of any atom of God's creatures?" Are we to admit with compunction that, in contrast to Christian beliefs, "man's freedom and his fulfilment were not to be gained, in that eastern belief, through war and the argument of the strong hand, but by love?" Tagore, once more, is a humorist; he knows his Mahabharata and his Raniayana, and we are very much mistaken if he will not be amused at reading his European disciple's description of him as a pacifist of the Western type. Again are we bidden to think of Blake and St. Francis and other mystics of the West, partly, perhaps, because during his stay in London he adapted himself with the easy politeness of an Indian gentleman to the literary atmosphere in which he found himself. But we have honest doubts whether Mr. Rhys and Mr. Yeats and other Celtic poets who lionized the Bengali man of letters have grasped the inner significance of the garden-house at Bolpur, or realize whither the Neo-Hinduism of Bengal is drifting.

That is not to say that Mr. Rhys's sketch is not pretty and pleasing, and calculated to give a delightful impression of one side of the Bengali poet's activities of intellect and character. Mr. Rhys even attempts a slight and rapid account of Bengali literature at large, obviously the only sound means of estimating Tagore's achievement as a writer. Much of this is necessarily compiled from materials collected at second hand, and can only be regarded as preliminary to a critical estimate by some scholar who has mastered the considerable and daily growing bulk of Tagore's writings in the original. Most of us know that there are serious problems ahead, serious but not insurmountable, in the administration of India. Men of letters are, consciously or unconsciously, moulding the minds of young India, giving them a bent to this or that view of the difficulties that await us and them.

Let us at least be glad that, if Mr. Rhys has ventured into the still unexplored field of Bengali literature, he has kept clear of Indian politics. We doubt whether Tagore in spite of his serene suavity of manner, will taste the somewhat sentimental adulation (something in the vein of "Pierre Loti", when he talks of Turks and Japanese) with which Mr. Rhys treats his subject. For Tagore, once more, is a man of humour, at times of a somewhat grim humour. Mr. Rhys admits that he does not read Tagore in the original. The latest number of that very remarkable and interesting magazine, *Sabuz Patra*, is wholly from Tagore's pen. Its first pages are printed on brilliantly yellow paper, symbolizing the spring sunshine of hope. May we roughly render a few lines from the preface to his spring verses?—

"Once upon a time the poet invited certain of his friends to a feast at an inn — on the first of April. The entertainment was like all such gatherings, but when at its conclusion the time came for the payment of the bill the poet was nowhere to be found! That was the April folly of that occasion. The joke of *this* April is much the same; let the reader bear that in mind. The feast celebrated by plucking the green leaves, the *sabuz patra*, of this spring shall have the poet's assistance till the end, the awful end of paying up, but when the assembled guests shall call for the cash of the meaning, then, oh poet, 'others shall be talking, talking, but thou shalt be speechless '"

It may be that when a poet is also a humorist there is a spice of mystification in his mysticism, and the sentimentally enthusiastic biographer should be on his watch against this feature in the poet's multiplex temperament.

Perhaps the most interesting part of Mr. Rhys's little book is his account of Tagore's school at Bolpur. Here are being trained many young fellows filled with the new self-consciousness and self-confidence of modern Bengal. Some go on to Oxford and Cambridge, to Paris and Berlin. One or two, we believe, are now detained in, we trust, not uncomfortable captivity in Germany. The *Santi Niketan* may yet be a greater force in India than the verses of which Mr. Rhys writes with just and generous enthusiasm. The future of Bengal and of

India at large will provide many anxious problems before long. It is not impossible that sentimental amateurs of translated Indian mysticism may, in Mr. Rhys's phrase, "change their perspective." Meanwhile it is open to us all to study Tagore's deft and delicate version of his own work. We heartily echo Mr. Rhys's regret that the short stories (by some compared to Guy de Maupassant's work in that kind) have been hitherto only partially and inadequately translated. In them is visible a gay good humour, a shrewd sense of human nature in all classes, which ought to be more congenial to the Western temperament than the mystical verses which are, as it were, "common form" in the East, a mere convention, common to Sufi and Hindu, a literary parallel to the "conceits" of English poets in the seventeenth century.

28 June, 1915

THE DUNDEE ADVERTISER

p2c6(D)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

**Rabindranath Tagore: A Biographical Study.** By Ernest Rhys. Macmillan. 5s. net.

This must be the ninth or tenth Tagore volume that the present reviewer has had the pleasure of reading — and not the least interesting of them all. For it tells us something more concrete about our distinguished Eastern sage, that scholar, philosopher, poet, saint, who has "taken the town" these last two years. It gives photographs of him — one of them, taken last year, of surpassing beauty and distinction. And it talks about his books in the most sympathetic and appreciative strain, so that one can compare and contrast one's own judgments and impressions with the reasoned conclusions of such an authority as Rhys. It is a pleasure, e.g., to find such high praise of "Sadhana", Tagore's "Addresses and Lay Sermons," of which quotations have been in the columns of the "Advertiser", and which, with all due honour and respect to the poetry, the reviewer is free to confess he has enjoyed most of all.

Tagore was born in Calcuttā in 1861, the bearer of an honoured name, the greatest now of the bearers of that name. A man of extraordinary parts; his stories (some are to be translated shortly, and by these all men will be able to judge him) are said to be better than his poems, and his poems are not only the delight of scholars, but they are the songs of the common people. It has been given him to realise the aspiration of old Fletcher, of Saltoun, about the making of his country's ballads. Besides all this, he is a great teacher, and almost certainly the most popular preacher or lecturer in India.

A record which suggests the versatility of Rudyard Kipling, the "Professor of the Energy of the Anglo-Saxon Race." Tagore is the Professor of the Beauty and the Wisdom of the Immemorial East.

It is interesting to know that when Tagore was in London and Paris a couple of years ago he viewed their love of luxury, their need of sensation, their craving for excitement, with the gravest misgiving; he felt things were all wrong together, and hastening to a crisis. To-day, we rejoice to think, he would find another spirit in both these cities. And as a comment on the different ideals which are cherished by the enemies of England and France to-day from those which we and our Allies stand for, we may conclude with a couple of sentences from "Sadhana", prefixing our grateful thanks to Mr. Rhys for his interesting volume, which is all too short:

Whenever some ancient civilisation fell into decay and died it was owing to causes which produced callousness of heart and led to the cheapening of man's worth; when either the State or some powerful group of men began to look upon the people as a mere instrument of their power; when, by compelling weaker races to slavery and trying to keep them down by every means, man struck at the foundation of his greatness. Civilisation can never sustain itself upon cannibalism of any form

13 July, 1915

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN  
p4c2(D)

### INDIAN CLASSICS

ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF KABIR. Translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted by Evelyn Underhill. London; Macmillan and Co. Pp.xiiv. 105. 4s. 6d. net.

VIDYAPATI: BANGIYA PADABALI. Translated by Ananda Coomaraswamy and Arun Sen. London: Old Holborn Press. Pp. xii. 192.

Little by little we are doing away with the occasion for reproach which the Germans used to fling at us as an Imperial nation (and no doubt now fling more heartily than ever) - the reproach of our profoundly contented ignorance of Indian culture and civilisation. Certain tracts of the earth have peculiarly produced some style of intellectual and spiritual life which has unalterably ennobled human destiny. No intelligent catalogue of these exceptional countries could leave out India; India would be in it if only as the antithesis of Greece. We are all supposed to know something of Greece, which is dead and buried; but India, which is not only living but living in our power, might very well, we thought, be left to the experts. However, we are not as a nation so comfortably in the dark now about India as we used to be. That antithesis of India and Greece, for instance, is not quite so clear nowadays. It used to be possible to put it somewhat in this way: Greece tried to make the best of both worlds by putting the other world under the control of this world; India tried to do it by putting this world under the control of the other world. But it has lately appeared that the other world played a much more decisive and vehement part in Greece than we used to reckon; and now we begin to discover that Indian thought may be none the less Indian for rapturously celebrating the glories of this present world. Here, for example, are two books of translations from thing of what the names Kabir and Vidyapati stand for is at least henceforth accessible to all of us. It must be frankly admitted that our understanding of the Indian spirit seems likely to owe more to Indian scholars like

Rabindranath Tagore and Ananda Coomaraswamy than to the work of English reader will find most striking in these two books? In the first place, no doubt, he will feel that he is in the presence of extraordinarily fine poetry, especially when it is communicated through the delicate simplicity of Sir Rabindranath's English. There is no resisting this sort of thing:

The middle region of the sky, wherein the  
spirit dwelleth, is radiant with the music  
of light;

There, where the pure and white music  
blossoms, my Lord takes his delight.

There is a little too much anxiety about Mr. Coomaraswamy's English; as in his persistent use of "olifant" for "elephant," to convey "by a slight suggestion of mystery" the Indian opinion that this beast is a type of grace and symmetry. But we must not cavil at a work which we can only call invaluable. Next, however, to the mere sense of great poetry which these two books must certainly give, most English readers would probably reckon as their noblest quality the superb enjoyment of life in them. Both Vidyapati and Kabir are mystics; being Indians, they could not very well be anything else. But with the melancholy mistrust of life, the denial of the world; which we are perhaps inclined to take as the specifically Indian attitude. It is difficult to think of anything more profoundly stirring than the way both these Indian poets contrive to focus all their ecstatic energies on the other world without in the least needing to qualify or disguise world of here and now. Vidyapati's flame for the whole range of earthly nature, belong not less but more to the present world for vision; this mysticism does not seek to mortify, but to glorify, the joys of mundane existence. Decidedly, these books should be read not simply because they are Indian, and because they are Indian, and because India is ours.

The two books are sufficiently supplied with the necessary elucidations; and Vidyapati's appeal is helped by a series of beautiful illustrations from Indian paintings.

16 July, 1915

THE CHURCH FAMILY NEWSPAPER  
p4(W)

### THE SOUL OF AN INDIAN POET\*

It is open to question whether many of us realise to the full all for which a poet stands. To the more Philistine among us he may count as little more than a singer of songs which are as music only to the chosen few; or, at most, as a man who flashes a light upon the darkness of the world, illuminating it for a brief moment, but making little lasting impression. Few of us, it must be admitted, have the eyes to see or the hearts to understand that his utterances are the outward expression of a spiritual conviction, which, whether for good or ill must in time (if his work be worthy of the name of poetry) play its part in the uplifting or lowering of the ideals of those who read and understand. Is it too much to say that it takes a poet to understand and appreciate a poet? Not, perhaps, if we take the word in a wider sense than that of a poetic craftsman, for surely many a one who could not give expression to his thoughts might yet take, by the very quality of those thoughts, a very humble place in the ranks of the poets?

Mr. Ernest Rhys, who has given us this delightful book on Sir Rabindranath Tagore, is, however a poet in the fullest sense of the word. We feel that it needs a "Seer" to read aright and to translate into current coin for us ordinary mortals, the soul of a man like this great Indian writer; and Mr. Rhys is admirably fitted for the task he has brought to so successful a conclusion. He is frankly a partisan, and some of us would perhaps find it difficult to go all the way with him in his enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he has proved himself to be an efficient guide to lead us through the magic gardens to which Rabindranath Tagore's genius has brought us.

Though one can gain a certain insight into the personality of a man by his creative art, one is always conscious of barriers which can only successfully be passed by a sympathetic biographer. The biographer must be one who has known and

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\*Rabindranath Tagore: A Biographical Study. By Ernest Rhys. (Macmillan. 5s. net.)

loved the man whose life he has studied, and in so doing has been able to pierce the veil which separates the spirit lying behind his actions, from the actions themselves. Mr. Rhys has shown himself to be well qualified to do this and to reveal Rabindranath Tagore to Western minds. We are grateful to him for the biography which has so manifestly been a real labour of love to him. Those to whom the poet is as yet a sealed book, will, we believe, hasten to become acquainted with him if they read Mr. Rhys's little work from cover to cover - while those who already know and love him will surely love him more.

31 July, 1915

### THE INQUIRER

p377(W)

### THE BENGALI POET AND SEER

**Rabindranath Tagore: A Biographical Study.**  
By Ernest Rhys. LONDON: Macmillan & Co.  
5s. net.

To those who read, about two years ago, with the surprise of a new joy, *Gitanjali*, and later, with continued though subdued joy, *The Gardener* and *Sadhana*, some account of the life and spiritual heritage of the author of these remarkable works should be exceptionally welcome. If Mr. Ernest Rhys disappoints them in some measure, in that they turn to his book expecting more than he has to give, this should not be urged too strongly against him. Matters of great interest concerning a personality so elect and impressive would doubtless be out of reach to an English biographer, and others, though known to him, may be justly withheld from the publicity of print. Yet it is impossible not to close the book with a slightly murmuring protest: "Here is too little about the man and too much comment on his writings, too meagre a story and a superfluity of exposition." For those who really care for such unique poetry and prose as Tagore's love best to discover for themselves the truth he has to give, the loveliness and the charm with which he offers it in words. What they would like is a more connected and plain record of the poet-

seer's life in this our everyday world.; whereas, for those who do not greatly care for his writings, this study would have, in any case, but small significance. Yet some things are told us here of quite vital interest, for which we should be thankful to Mr. Rhys, and his discussion of the sources of inspiration in earlier Indian poets, and the light he throws on the opening years of Mr. Tagore's life, are a valuable contribution to our knowledge and to our chances of appreciation.

The chapter entitled "Shanti Niketan," with its excellent account of the school at Bolpur founded by the poet, and kept, by his influence and personality, on so high a level of educational equipment, is all that could be wished. The story of that wonderful achievement is an illustration of what all readers of *Gitanjali* and *Sadhana* must have discovered - that this Eastern seer, this poet of the contemplative religious life, is also a man of action, a reformer, a lover of deeds that make for human progress in this imperfect world. It reminds us of that remarkable chapter in *Sadhana* on "Realisation in Action." We seem to discover the mystic of the East and the energetic worker of the West combined in this bringer of visionary ideals into the practical activities of the modern world. "O Worker of the Universe," he exclaims at the close of that chapter, "We would pray to thee to let the irresistible current of thy universal energy come like the impetuous south wind of spring... Let our newly awakened powers cry out for unlimited fulfilment in leaf and flower and fruit."

Some literary blemishes in Mr. Rhys's work suggest haste in writing or carelessness in correcting printers' errors. The reader stumbles on such phrases as "A poet who was living in the time of Burns and wrote love-songs that *something offer his passionate sincerity*"; "Emotion tied to congenial rhythms and concrete forms"; "a savour of childish mystery about the girl who is the signal figure". "He (Tagore's father) provided the congenial atmosphere in which that son's nature could grow to its *full flourish*". The words we have italicised, even where they make sense, are surely unworthy of such a critic and so loyal a promoter of good literature as the author of this Study.

But against all that, let the following passage stand for illustration of the many true and lumi-

nous statements and appreciations with which these pages abound. Speaking of the "Song-offerings," as the poems of *Gitanjali* are called, the author says, we found in them "an accent that was new to us, yet natural as our own hopes and fears. They took up our half-formed wishes and gave them a voice; they rose inevitably from the life, the imagination, and the desires of him who wrote. They were the vehicle of a great emotion that surprised its imagery not only in the light that was like music, the rhythm that was in the waves and sound itself and the light-waves of the sun; but in the rain, the wet road, the lonely house, the great wall that shuts in the creature-self, the shroud of dust, the night black as the black-stone. It was an emotion so sure of itself that it made no effort after originality, but took the things that occur to us all, and dwelt upon them, and made them alive and musical and significant."

Mr Rhys tells us that, in the original, "Tagore," is spelt "Thakur." How grievous that a name so much more pleasing to sight and hearing should have been changed in English to the harsh prosaic Tagore! Is it too late to adopt the Bengali name, both in spelling and pronunciation? "Rabindranath Thakur" would read and sound so well.

W.J.J.

5 August, 1915

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

p262(W)

### POEMS OF KABIR

**ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF KABIR.** Translated by RABINDRANATH TAGORE and EVELYN UNDERHILL. India Society. (The Chiswick Press. 7s. 6d. net.) **KABIR'S POEMS.** (Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.)

We have here a choice edition of Kabir's Poems issued by the India Society, and a replica in a cheaper but still very pleasant form by Messrs. Macmillan. The work of this fifteenth century Indian mystic and poet will be new to most English readers, and will be to many of them a revelation

of the freedom and boldness of Indian thought. It will help them to understand that Hindu religion is not a formal system, but a perpetual outflow of thought deeply coloured by emotion, and animating now this intellectual form now that, as it sweeps on to its ever receding goal - the conquest of all Nature by an insatiable metaphysic. There is nothing in which the subtlety and daring of the human mind have been more exercised than in this apparently unending efflux of philosophic thought and in the shapes and symbols by which it seeks to make itself apprehensible. But with the passion for significant forms, which is so marked a feature of Hindu speculation, there has arisen now and then, as might have been expected, a passionate negation of all forms, the craving for unity with the Divine by the road of direction intuition - in a word that we call Mysticism. Of this tendency we have a striking example in Kabir; and the literature of mysticism has certainly been enriched by the hundred poems which the India Society has fished out of waters not commonly visited by European explorers. Miss Underhill was clearly the right person to be associated with Sir R. Tagore in presenting the works of Kabir to English readers; and the interesting introduction which she contributes to the volume contains the main facts about the life of the weaver-poet, and criticizes his philosophy with sympathy.

Kabir appears to have been of Mahomedan origin, but he has no hesitation in declaring his aloofness from all formal creeds:

There is nothing but water at the holy bathing places; and I know that they are useless, for I have bathed in them.

The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak; I know, for I have cried aloud to them

The Purana and the Koran are mere words; lifting up the curtain, I have seen.

The revelation is everywhere to those who can see. The "Unstruck Music," of which Kabir continually speaks, is always beating at our ears if we would but open them:

I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my body:

I see with eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty everywhere;

I utter His name and whatever I see, it reminds me of Him; whatever I do, it becomes His worship.

These are familiar ideas, but they are here presented to us with novel imagery, and in simple and beautiful language, from the heart of the East 500 years ago. Sir R. Tagore and his collaborator will have given them, we think, a permanent place in the European treasury of devotional thought.

31 August, 1915

**THE GLASGOW HERALD**

p10c6(D)

### THE VOICE OF INDIA

**"Rabindranath Tagore: A Biographical Study."**  
By Ernest Rhys. 5s. net. (London: Macmillan & Co.)

At brief intervals during the last few years we have had the pleasure of reviewing as they appeared the works of Mr. Tagore; nor did the pleasure lessen because we knew beforehand the drift of what he would say and knew what the nature of that pleasure would be. His message was not new, though those who made a cult or a lion of him seemed to think it new; for the best, of our poets had thought in like fashion, and most had spoken in his way, since the highest in man is one, if that highest be spiritual. What was attractive in the poet's work was his illuminating simplicity. However fine the roses of yesterday, his morning's come with a new charm, and the poetry of Mr. Tagore had that same charm. The purest and loftiest thought of man was uttered in speech that was clear as crystal. There was depth but no obscurity, mysticism without darkness, spirituality undivorced from plain living. That the man lived what he wrote was probably the root of the matter, but his real secret was that of the artist - he could write what he lived; and even then the English reader must miss what only the Bengali could perceive, that rhythmical vesture of the thought on which all poetry is uplifted as with wings. How

much we do miss may be gathered from the biographical study of Mr. Rhys, when we read that the songs of Tagore are sung even by poor men wandering through India, and that "if he is announced to speak in a hall in Calcutta it is surrounded by crowds for whom there is no place within and who listen outside for the sound of his voice." When a British poet is as popular as a musical comedy or Mr. Lloyd George we shall begin to believe that our race, too, has been quickened by the breath of the spirit; not that day is very far off. If there is any truth in the glimpses we get here of Hindu crowds listening rapt to such pure song as that of Nimai and Govindu Das, then we in the West are yet but raw barbarians. Of course the racial allusive value of Mr. Tagore's work is lost on us. Many of his words and a great part of his metaphor are no doubt rich with significance to his fellow countrymen - words have blood and breed like men and carry inherited power - but this will not alone explain his popularity. When Irishmen adore Mr. Yeats and Belgians Mr. Maeterlinck then the Western world's great age will begin anew. Not that we are altogether without hope, for Mr. Tagore has received in Britain a very genuine welcome, and imperial dream have stood humbled before his unworldliness; and that they have been chastened by the appalling vision of a militarism that deems itself holy, some of his purer spirit may possess our nation when these red days are past.

Mr. Rhys attempts no ordered biography and does not seek to criticise. His aim - and his chief difficulty - has been to make intelligible to us a man of alien thought and pace who is yet one of ourselves by virtue of his genius as a poet and the beauty and nobility of his thought. He is not unsuccessful, but we doubt if it can be done by anyone except by some brother Hindu who is steeped in the traditions of the West. After all, he has had to go by hearsay. We gather that he knows no Bengali. Alas! imagine Burns interpreted by one who knew no Scots. Heine by one who knew no German. He gives us just enough to make us eager for more about that Bengali race which has a poetical tradition that always nobel and bigger, and we wonder if it is entirely true. Picture all Scotland as one Burns club, really ardent for poetry and stirred to

tears by sheer beauty! Surely one such race would convert the world.

The closing chapters reveal the true reason why the poet has found an audience here. In religion he says what most of us are thinking - "Our only rites and ceremonies are self-sacrificing good works," and he has sought to carry the teaching of his Sadhana into practice in a school of peace established by himself at Shantiniketan. Here, is an atmosphere of music, country air, natural life, and kindness, a creed, which is also a poet's dream, is actually lived, and the only basis of true reconciliation between East and West established. The East must live, not merely dream, and the West must dream nobly, not merely progress materially. Rabindranath Tagore is a reconciler as every true poet in his small way is. The book has several illustrations, four of the poet, very simple but impressive.

7 September, 1915

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p4c5(D)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE:  
A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY.**

**By Ernest Rhys. London, Macmillan & Co.  
pp.xviii. 5s. net.**

Mr. Ernest Rhys is, apparently, at the same disadvantage with regard to Tagore's writings as most of the rest of us. He knows these writings only in so far as they have been translated; he has, that is to say, a very partial knowledge of a small portion of them. On the other hand, he knows Tagore personally, and has been at pains to acquire some knowledge of the conditions which have governed the poet's creative development. The book is, largely, a compilation, but it is a compilation managed and informed by acute sympathy with the man and his work. Most of Tagore's English readers will find it a suggestive commentary. It supplies us with some understanding of the poet's nature, and enables us to "place" him in that remote world of Indian feeling and Indian custom of which his songs and plays and metaphysics are highly individual reflex; in particular, it very usefully describes the special artis-

tic and spiritual movement which prompted Tagore's energies. Mr. Rhys, however, leaves us still hoping for a thorough, critical account of Tagore's work as a whole, done by some competent Orientalist.

10 September, 1915

**THE IRISH TIMES**

p7c3(D)

**KABIR'S POEMS**

These poems are the work of an Indian mystic who lived in the fifteenth century, and are remarkable for their vigour and range of thought. Born a Moham-medan, about the year 1440, Kabir in early life sat at the feet of Ramananda, the originator of great religious revival in Northern India. But his religious passion was innate. Though a Mohammedan, his devotion to the Supreme Spirit caused him to describe himself as "at once the child of Allah and of Rah" [sic]. Intolerant of religious exclusivism, he endeavoured consistently to lead men to the "liberty of the children of God". His poems were written not in the literary language, but in the popular Hindi, and were deliberately addressed to the people. Repeatedly he sings the praise of the home, the "daily round", with its opportunities for love and self-sacrifice. The sense of all-pervading Spirit impelled him to scorn the yogi and all who thought it necessary to cut themselves off from a world permeated with love and beauty. Such views were, of course, heretical as seen through orthodox Hindu or Moham-medan eyes, and Kabir was regarded as a dangerous man. Fearlessly, however, he appraised the "Simple Union" with Divine reality as a duty and a joy. Mere external observances were distasteful to him.

"The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak  
I know, for I have cried aloud to them.  
The Purana and the Koran are mere words.  
Lifting up the curtain, I have seen."

The poems, we feel sure, will find many appreciative readers. They are charmingly translated, and seem to retain all the fresh simplicity of the original expression.

"Kabir's Poem" Translated by Rabindranath Tagore.  
Assisted by Evelyn Underhill. London: Macmillan.  
4s 6d. net.

2 October, 1915

## THE WARRINGTON EXAMINER

p7(W)

### NEW BOOKS

**Rabindranath Tagore: A Biographical Study.**  
**By Ernest Rhys. London: Macmillan & Co.**  
**5s. net.**

Mr. Rhys' task, in writing this book, was a very difficult one. Mr. Tagore is a poet who has attained an enormous vogue in his native country, India, and who, through the wonderfully beautiful translations into English which he has made of a few of his works, bids fair to achieve a great reputation among lovers of poetry in this country. But much of Mr. Tagore's work remains untranslated, and, as Mr. Rhys admits, even the works that are translated are said, by those competent to judge, to be finer in the original when they were accompanied by the Indian music to which they are usually sung. It is not an easy task to present a study of a writer whose native tongue is unknown outside his own country, and of whose works only a few are known; yet Mr. Rhys is so keenly sympathetic, he is so deeply penetrated with the spirit of Tagore's writings and teaching, that notwithstanding the difficulties, his book is a very valuable commentary on the published translations of Mr. Tagore's work, and should do much towards elucidating some of their difficulties.

To anyone unfamiliar with the form of Tagore's translations from his own writings the first impression seems to be one of strangeness, but this soon gives way to appreciation of its extreme beauty and the happiness of the imagery which he employs. His English versions have been compared to some of the finer passages of the Old Testament, and the comparison, in our opinion, is extremely apt.

The subjects Mr. Tagore chooses for his writings are very varied, and he uses as mediums verse, prose and drama. He treats of the philosophy of life in one volume, and another, he writes of chil-

dren, and we will quote one exquisite example of his art from this book - "The Crescent Moon":

Bless this little heart, this white soul that has  
won the kiss of heaven for our earth

He loves the light of the sun, he loves the sight  
of his mother's face,

He has not learned to despise the dust and han-  
ker after gold

Clasp him to your heart and bless him

He has come into this land of an hundred cross-  
roads.

I know not how he chose from the crowd, came  
to your door, and grasped your hand to ask his way

He will follow you, laughing and talking, and  
not a doubt in his heart,

Keep his trust, lead him straight, and bless him

The book called "Sadhana", is a volume of addresses and lay-sermons which were delivered in America and England, and contains the message which Mr. Tagore, as a representative of the East wishes to give to the West

Mr. Rhys has the advantage of personal acquaintance with Mr. Tagore, and the glimpses he gives us of the impressions made on Mr. Tagore by the civilisation of the Western nations are very interesting. "... he spoke," says Mr. Rhys, "with alarm of the temper of the great nations and the life of the great cities like Paris and London, whose love of luxury, need of sensation, and craving for excitement were up against every finer instinct he cherished. When he spoke of the forces in the western world which he thought must become disruptive and lead to trouble, and stretched out his hands, it might have been the moral map of Europe, with its teeming continent and restless atoms, that lay spread out before him. The major energies, as he viewed them, were not constructive; they did not make for the world's commonwealth, and by their nature they must come into conflict sooner or later". This was said before the war, and in recalling it, Mr. Rhys quotes a passage from "Sadhana" bearing on it. "Whenever some ancient civilisation fell into decay and died, it was owing to causes which produced callousness of heart and led to cheapening of man's worth: when either the State of some powerful group of men began to look upon the people as a mere instrument of their power, when,

by compelling weaker races to slavery and trying to keep them down by every means, man struck at the foundation of his greatness. Civilisation can never sustain itself upon cannibalism of any form"

One can, perhaps, partially realise what the present war must mean to a man with the spiritual perceptions of Mr. Tagore.

There is an extremely interesting section of the book devoted to the educational establishment which Mr. Tagore runs at Shanti Niketan, which shows how deep and great is his interest in the future of India.

There is a number of excellent photographs, which add greatly to the interest of the book.

10 December, 1915

#### **PUBLIC OPINION**

p600(W)

#### **TAGORE AND HIS BOYS**

Mr. Frederic Rose, a master of an elementary mixed school at Stockton Heath, wrote to Sir Rabindranath Tagore asking to know what "methods you adopt for the unfolding of the mental and spiritual faculties of your pupils, whether such methods be peculiarly Oriental or not, or any course of psychological study which I might undertake".

Tagore replied in these terms from Jorasanko, Calcutta, and the letters are published in the *Warrington Guardian*.

"To give spiritual culture to our boys was my principal object in starting my school in Bolpur. Fortunately, in India we have the model before us in the tradition of our ancient forest schools, where teachers, whose aim was to realise their lives in God, had their homes. The atmosphere was full of aspiration for the infinite, and the students who grew up with

their teachers closely united with them in spiritual relationship felt the reality of God - for it was no mere creed imposed upon them, or a speculative abstraction.

"Having this ideal of a school in my mind, which should be a home and temple in one, where teaching should be a part of a worshipful, I selected this spot away from all distractions of town, hallowed with the memory of a pious life whose days were passed here in communion with God.

"You must not imagine that I have fully realised my ideal - but the ideal is there working itself out through all the obstacles of the hard prose of modern life. In spiritual matters one should forget that he must teach others, or achieve results that can be measured, and in my school here I think it proper to measure our success by the spiritual growth in the teachers. In these things, gain to one's personal self is gain to all, like lighting a lamp which is lighting a whole room.

"The first help that our boys get here on this path is from the cultivation of love of Nature, and sympathy with all living creatures. Music is of very great assistance to them - the songs being not of the ordinary hymn type - dry and didactic, but as full of lyric joy as the author could put in them. You can understand how these songs affect the boys when you know that singing them is the best enjoyment they choose for themselves in their leisure time, in the evening when the moon is up, in the rainy days when their classes are closed.

"Mornings and evenings, fifteen minutes' time is given them to sit in an open space, composing their minds for worship. We never watch them and ask questions about what they think in those times, but leave it entirely to themselves, to the spirit of the place and the time, and the suggestion of the practice itself. We rely more upon the subconscious influence of Nature, of the association of the place and the daily life of worship that we live than on any conscious effort to teach them.

**"RABINDRANATH TAGORE".**

***Period 1916-1919***

**Nationalism**  
**Renunciation of Knighthood**



1916

4 January, 1916

**THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL  
SUPPLEMENT**

p12(W)

**School Music  
CHILDREN AND OPERA**

At one of the performances of opera at the Shaftesbury Theatre last week there was a small boy seated in the stalls who had quite definite opinions. He told them to his mother as the opera progressed, and occasionally the rest of the stalls had the benefit of them. When the ranting tenor took a bar's rest his "I don't like that one" came piercingly above the orchestra. One could not help sympathizing with him, although the ranting tenor was an averagely good specimen of his kind. The criticism made one realize what is the root objection to taking children to the opera. To put it bluntly, it is not good enough for them; they are not hoodwinked by its bluster as older people often are. Yet the opera should be one of the most natural means of musical education, a far more natural one than learning the piano or than listening to orchestral music.

To children the dividing line between speech and song is a fine one; there is scarcely any perceptible division between musical rhythm and the rhythm of physical movement. Every teacher in an elementary school or a guild of play centre knows that melody, poetry, and dance are so closely associated in the child's mind that they are best learned together. The singing games which permeate the folk-music of every country, and in which our own country is, or has been, peculiarly rich, are nothing more nor less than the operas which children make up for themselves. Unlike older and more prosaic minds, they are not troubled by conscientious scruples about singing things which would be spoken in ordinary life, because they do not live an ordinary life, or rather they make no hard-and-fast distinctions between ordinary and extraordinary life. So when a child greets the tenor with "I don't like that one," it does not mean that the tenor is despised for singing instead of speaking, but for making a fuss about himself and his emotions and treating them as something extraordinary:

The singing games of the children's folklore are lyrical, as grown-up folksong is; their action is symbolic rather than histrionic. They find the greatest common measure of the three arts and draw expression out of their union, an expression which is beyond the subject matter of any one of them.

Rabindranath Tagore has recently said something about that kind of expression in an article called, "The Real and the Ideal." He had been listening to some singing by "a young man and two young women, who perhaps sing tolerably well," in the saloon of the liner which carried him back to India; and listening, as he always listens, with the heart of a child and the brain of a man, he put his conclusion as follows:

What I mark invariable in all of them is a strong emphasis both in the tunes as well as in the voice of the singers. The effort and emphasis, I notice, are not an integral part of the songs themselves, but are urged and impelled, to a large extent, from without. It betrays an evident desire to make the emotions quite palpable and obvious to the listeners by this urging and straining of both voice and tune.

Of course, it is natural that when we express any emotion our voice rises and falls with the rise and fall of the feelings expressed. But music is not an imitation of nature, neither is it allied in any way of histrionism. If we confound the one with the other we should repress the pure form of music ...

I do not care to know how the lover actually feels when I listen to a love song, but I must find out *the feeling of that feeling*, that inner and delicate feeling which alone can be translated into music.

Now it is with that inner and delicate feeling that opera essentially has to do; and the great composers of operas, whose works have become classics, have always kept it in view. They have worked with the conviction that they had something more to do than merely to give urgency to the contrasted emotions of their characters by one vivid musical phrase after another. That is what justifies the claim put forward that all great operatic music is also symphonic. The symphonic sense - that is, the development of an idea which is larger than the sum of its component parts - gives life

Hydr., Kant, Jan. 24.

A. M. CURTIS

January 24.

Your obedient servant,

E. R. P. N.

### THE OARSMEN.

Do you hear the roar of death through the listening hush of distance,  
And that awful call midst fire-floods and poison clouds and the wrattle of earth and  
sky in mortal combat,

—The Captain's call to steer the ship towards a shore yet unnamed ?

For that time is over—the stagnant time in the port—

Where the same old store is bought and sold in an endless round.

Where dead things gather in the exhaustion and emptiness of truth.

They wake up in sudden fear and ask, "Comrades, what is the hour of the night ? When  
shall open the golden gate of the new dawn .

The murky clouds have blotted out all stars—

Who are there to see the beckoning finger of the day .

They rush out with arms in hand, the beds are emptied in the house, the mother prays  
the silent wife watches by the door.

The wail of separation sweeps the sky like rushing wings of night birds,

And there rings the Captain's voice in the dark.

"Come, sailors, for the time in the haven is over !"

All the black evils in the world have overflowed their banks.

Yet, oarsmen, take your places with the blessing of sorrow in your souls !

Whom do you blame, brothers ? Bow your heads down !

The sin has been yours and ours.

The heat growing in the heart of God for ages—

The cowardice of the weak, the arrogance of the strong, the greed of fat prosperity,  
the rancor of the deprived, pride of race, and insult to man—

Has burst God's peace, raging in storm.

Like a ripe pod, let the tempest break its heart into pieces, scattering thunders,

Stop, your bluster of abuse and self-praise, my friends,

And with the calm of silent prayer on your brows sail forward to the shore of the new  
world.

We have known sins and evils every day and death we have met.

They pass over our world like clouds mocking us with their transient lightning laughter,

Suddenly they have stopped, growing stupendous,

And men must stand before them saying—

"We do not fear you, O Monster ! For we have lived every moment of our life by con-  
quering you,

"And we die with the faith that Peace is true, and Good is true, and true is the  
eternal One !"

If the Deathless dwell not in the heart of death,

If glad wisdom bloom not bursting the sheath of sorrow,

If sin do not die of its own revelation,

If pride break not under its load of decorations,

Then whence comes the hope that drives these men from their homes in the air rushing  
to their death in the morning light ?

Shall the value of the martyrs' blood and mothers' tears be utterly lost in the dust of  
the earth, not buying Heaven with their price ?

And when Man guards his mortal bounds, is not the Boundless revealed that moment ?

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

like to "Here come three dukes a-riding" and to *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in spite of all the difference between their dimensions. The lack of it places the operas of the modern Italian school definitely outside the pale of classical opera. They are for ever insisting upon transitory emotions of the histrionic kind. Singers who are not by nature artists are content with this – in fact, make it their chief aim, like the singers whom Tagore heard. But the unsophisticated listener, be he an Oriental poet or a child fresh from his games, is not deceived. The pity is that the child so soon becomes sophisticated; and in London, at any rate, we do everything to spoil his instinct by a succession of Christmas pantomimes and plays with rapid and meaningless music.

The whole business of opera performance in this country is at present too chaotic for anything else to be possible, but there is no reason why it should always be so. People are already taking the matter much more seriously than they did. Covent Garden is closed, temporarily, at any rate. Sir Thomas Beecham has educated both himself and his public in the few years in which he has been at work. The company at the Shaftesbury has great possibilities for usefulness. But none of these beneficent circumstances is the root of the matter. What is far more likely to give an intelligent appreciation of music and drama in the future is the cultivation of song and dance and poetry, which begins to thrive outside the opera itself. The work begun by the games of infant schools and going on to such institutions as the Folk-dance School at Stratford, Miss Margaret Morris's dancers, Mr. Rutland Boughton's Operatic School at Glastonbury is gradually spreading. What one would like to see would be some attempt to give a series of operas, carefully chosen and carefully done, specially for the benefit of such audiences as are drawn to Miss Kimpton's Orchestral Concerts for Young People. They need not have any elaborate accessories of scenery; the orchestral music could be arranged for a small body of players; the actors might be – in fact, probably had better be – chiefly intelligent amateurs. But the one thing which would have to be of the first class would be the musical and dramatic *ensemble*, so that no youthful critic should exclaim "I don't like this one."

16 March, 1916

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**  
p128(W)

## **TAGORE AND GEORGE CALDERON**

### **THE MAHARANI OF ARAKAN**

**Founded on the story of Sir Rabindranath Tagore.  
By GEORGE CALDERON. (Griffiths. 4s. 6d. net.)**

There can be no longer any hope, it appears, that George Calderon, "missing" in Gallipoli, will ever revisit the theatre for which, had he lived, he would have perhaps done sterling work. In a sense, this little book is a kind of memorial to him, though not, we hope, the only memorial in literary form that he is to receive. The play is one that he adapted for the Indian Art and Dramatic Society, which gave a number of successful performances of it. Founded on a story by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, it tells how the King of Arakan, in the guise of a peasant, wooed and won Amina, daughter of Shah Suja of Delhi, who was living in concealment in the hut of a poor fisherman, because the King's father had put her own father to death. She knows that she is a princess, but, in spite of all that her proud and vengeful sister, Rosheneara, has to say, she likes her humble life and has learned to love this supposed peasant, who under the name of Dalia, has served her with faithful and homely devotion. And then, at last, it is revealed that he is the King of Arakan, and old feuds are healed in love.

For George Calderon, this was not a characteristic work, as reference to his other plays would show, but a pleasant little excursion. There is much more in the book and rightly, of Tagore than of Calderon. Mr. K.N. das Gupta has collected in the introductory matter some extracts from estimates and accounts of Sir Rabindranath and his work. Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee, after pointing out that through Sir Rabindranath Tagore Bengali literature has outgrown its provincial character, and becomes "fit to fraternize with world-literature," goes on to touch on the political views of this poet and mystic, descendant of mystics and poets. There is no chauvinism, he tells us, in Sir Rabindranath. He wishes the East to take what it can from the West, as one man will take without

servility from another. "The yoke of the stranger is largely a consequence and a symptom"; for to the poet-reformer it seems that "the chains of inertness, cowardice and ignorance, of selfishness and pleasure-seeking, of superstition, of custom, of authority, of priestcraft, and of the letter of the shastras, constitute our real bondage." The Rev. C.F. Andrews tells us how Tagore's songs are not only read in books; they are sung to music and pass from mouth to mouth all over India; even in districts where their dialect is strange men sing them and love them. He is the voice of modern Bengal, and of far more than that, more even than of modern India - of love and peace and spiritual freedom all the world over. The fragment taken from Mr. W.B. Yeats's introduction to the India Society's edition of "Gitanjali" will be familiar to many readers; but those who are not yet well up in the work of Tagore might find the little volume before us useful as a first step in the study of a great and beautiful mind. Though *The Maharan of Arakan* cannot compare with *Chitra* or *The Post-Office*, it is charming and significant.

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India, he says, wants Englishmen, otherwise the purpose of Indian history will remain unfulfilled, but "we must have entrance to their hearts, not merely to their office rooms." He continues:-

Because the Bengalis have become a mere adjective to the Englishmen, signifying dislike, it has become difficult for the latter to feel our reality. I had hoped that Bengali youths might have been taken as volunteer to serve in this present war. If we could sacrifice our lives - so I thought - in the same cause with the English soldiers, we should at once become real to them, and claim fairness at their hands ever after.

I entreat those in authority to bear this in mind, that we could have hoped that the Young Bengal of to-day might have carried reverence and love for Englishmen into the world from those universities where they had come in touch with their English professors. This would have surely happened if, as *guru*, these teachers had been able to win their hearts when their hearts were fully susceptible to love. But, on the contrary, if this relation between teacher and student be founded on fear and hate and punishment, then the poison of the disease will be driven from the blood into the very vitals. Distrust of all Englishmen will be transformed into an instinct from one generation to another.

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27 April, 1916

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p203(W)

**Section: DRAMA**

**Title: CALIPH FOR A DAY:**

**By K.N. Dasgupta**

Caliph for a day: An amusing comedy. Indian Music Arranged for Pianos. Remarks on Indian Music by Sir Rabindranath Tagore.

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18 September, 1916

**THE TIMES**

p9c2(D)

**Section: "IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS  
ITEMS"**

"Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived at Seattle, U.S.A. He will remain in America several weeks.

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2 May, 1916

**THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT**

p57(W);

Sir Rabindranath Tagore will have an article on the closing of the Presidency College in the next issue of the Modern Review, an Indian monthly.

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driven back

cloak for their ill-fortune. If these just grievances  
were righted, the supply of nurses would be ade-  
quate.

Mr. Lloyd George had an audience of the King  
at Windsor Castle on Saturday.

### THANKSGIVING.

Those who walk on the path of pride  
crushing the lowly life under their tread,  
spreading their footprints in blood  
upon the tender green of thy earth,  
Let them rejoice, and thank thee, Lord,  
for the day is theirs.

But thou hast done well in leaving me with  
the humble  
whose doom it is to suffer  
and bear the burden of power,  
and hide their faces and stifle their sobs in  
the dark.

For every throb of their pain  
has pulsed in the secret depth of thy night,  
and every insult has been gathered  
in thy great silence,  
And the morrow is theirs.

O Sun, rise upon the bleeding hearts  
blossoming in flower of the morning  
and the torchlight revelry of pride  
hiding in its own ashes.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE,**



British  
yet Indian  
past lives

Fig. 26 Tagore's poem in *The Times*  
18 September 1916, p9

21 September, 1916

## THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

p140(W)

### WHERE TAGORE TEACHES

#### THE BOLPUR SCHOOL

An Indian correspondent sends us the following account of the school taught by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who is now on a visit to Japan and the United States, and one of whose poems was published in *The Times* last Saturday:

Everyone has heard of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. many have come to know him through his works; but few, I believe, have been told of his school at Bolpur. A short account of it, therefore, by one who has been a resident there for a number of years will be of interest to readers of the *Educational Supplement*.

From Calcutta one goes about a hundred miles north-eastward and gets down on a shabby little

platform. A weather-beaten tin shed protects the traveller from sun and rain. The traveller walks amidst rural sights and sounds down the long meandering road that lies ahead of him, like a huge red scimitar. He sees around him a vast plain spotted with little villages surrounded by clusters of palm and bamboo trees. The red hillocks in the distance merge into the horizon. He meets the country swains on their way to the market or returning from the nearest town with their purchases. He greets the passing cartman on his bullock-cart, singing merrily. The world around him is a world of peace and rest. On the traveller goes until he reaches a two-storeyed, brick-built house. This is the Shantumketan, the "Abode of Peace." Maharshi Devendranath Tagore chose this spot and built this house for his religious meditations. Close to it is situated the Mandir, or prayer-hall, built of wood and glass. In this spacious hall Rabindranath preaches to the students of his school. Most of the religious discourses published in his *Sadhana* were

originally delivered here and appeared in the volumes entitled "Shantiniketan." From the Shantiniketan one goes about a hundred yards south and finds a number of large rooms, brick-built and thatched with straw. These are the school buildings. The rooms admit of abundant light and ventilation.

The object of starting the school was to give Indian lads an education which is moral as well as secular, and thereby to provide what is a crying need in Bengal. Boys above twelve years of age are not admitted. All the boys, big and small, are boarders. A boy is not put into the same class for all his subjects. Thus, one who is proficient in English is allowed to read in a higher English class; and if at the same time he is weak in mathematics he reads in a lower group for that subject. This process goes on until he reaches a certain general standard of proficiency. He is then placed in the class which prepares him and sends him up for the matriculation examination. The teachers live in the same room with the students, so the former are always at hand to help the little ones. The teachers also take the boys out into the open fields, giving them lessons from life and nature. The boys (Except those preparing for the University examination) are not allowed to study in the evening. This time is occupied more pleasantly for them. The teachers entertain them with stories and elementary experiments in sciences. The boys also have literary and debating clubs, and at certain intervals dramatic representations of plays written for them by Tagore, who himself generally takes part in those that are held at the close of every session.

The school is not affiliated to the University. The boys appear at the matriculation examination (the institution is only a school, be it remembered) as private students. The authorities of the school are thus not hampered by the University rule and regulations, and can work upon those methods which they believe to be most conducive to the development of the students. The boys' physique is not neglected. Many games, both eastern and western, are provided for in the open air. The classes are held out-doors under the tree, a fact which is largely responsible for the health and vigour of the pupils.

A word now as to the moral education given at Bolpur school. Its chief aim is to make the boys

strong in their power of resisting the temptations and overcoming the difficulties that lie between them and their idea. *Nayamatma Valahinena laya* (the soul can never be realized by the weak), says our scripture. The boys do all their work themselves. Except the cook and his mates, there are no servants. They rise very early in the morning, and after performing some physical exercises, they bathe in water which they have themselves drawn from the well. After bath, they sit down in the vast open field to pray. Each is allowed to pray in his own way. After the prayer, which generally takes ten minutes, they assemble together and sing Vedic hymns. Their voices rise into the blue skies, and who knows that they do not reach the Throne?

The boys are encouraged to do social services. They go about the villages, like the Christian missionaries, with books and medicine, which they distribute to the villagers. Without respect of persons or castes they attend to the sick. It is common to see a Brahmin boy of the school speaking words of comfort and administering relief to some poor "untouchable." Thanks to their enterprise, night schools have also been founded for the benefit of such low-caste people. And as they return from the villages, with clear sky and a soft moon overhead and the giant trees around, do they not hear His silent footsteps in the darkness, and feel that he comes, he comes, he ever comes?

8 November, 1916

**THE DAILY EXPRESS**

p2c5(D)

#### Section: TO-DAY'S BOOK REVIEWS

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

By **SIDNEY DARK**

"Fruit-Gathering". By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan. 4s. 6d.)

"Hungry Stones and Other Stories" by Sir Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan. 5s.)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore's new poem "Fruit-gathering" has his characteristic sympathy and affinity, not only with all men, but with all the world. The

Indian poet has nothing of wild Western passions. It would not seem that life is to him a thrilling-adventure, but life is beautiful and the world is lovable, and with all the confusion he feels all the time that events follow one another according to a mysterious but perfect plan. His gentle optimism finds delightful expression in the following:-

I have kissed this world with my eyes and my limbs; I have wrapt it within my heart in numberless folds; I have flooded its days and nights with thoughts till the world and my life have grown one - and I love my life because I love the light of the sky so unwoven with me.

If to leave this world be as real as to love it - then there must be a meaning in the meeting and the parting of life.

If that love were deceived in death, then the canker of this deceit would eat into all things, and the stars would shrivel and grow black.

Sir Rabindranath's stories are as individual as his poems. There is the same insistent understanding of the essentials and the same ever-present pity. The writing is beautiful, and Sir Rabindranath has on occasion a very charming humor. The first story in this volume is occult and creepy. It is supposed to be narrated in a railway waiting-room, and at the end the hearers conclude that the whole thing is a fabrication.

"The discussion that followed ended in a life-long rupture between my theosophist kinsman and myself." Indeed, a human conclusion to a ghost story.

The second story, "The Victory," tells of a contest between a gentle, dreamy poet and a loud-mouthed, cocksure rival. The loud-mouthed one swayed the judges by his emphasis:-

"The atmosphere was completely cleared of all illusion of music, and the vision of the world around seemed to be changed from its freshness of tender green to the solidity of a high road levelled and made hard with crushed stones."

Could an idea be conveyed more perfectly or more completely?

23 November, 1916

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT  
p559-560(W)

### POEMS AND TALES BY TAGORE

**FRUIT-GATHERING.** By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net)

**HUNGRY STONES AND OTHER STORIES.** By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Translated from the original Bengali by various writers. (Macmillan. 5s. net.)

Readers of *The Times* will be glad to know that the new volume of poems by Sir Rabindranath Tagore contains "The Oarsmen", "Thanksgiving", and other fine poems of the war which he has contributed to its pages. "Fruit-gathering" is the successor to "Gitanjali", or "Song Offerings"; and, like that first book, which made Sir Rabindranath Tagore's poetry known to English readers, it fills one with a desire to know Bengali so as to be able to read the poems in the original. Partly because so we might enjoy the "subtlety of rhythm", the "untranslatable delicacies of colour", of which the originals are said to be full, and know these poems relieved of the occasional limpness of form and flatness of music which even Sir Rabindranath Tagore's English prose cannot wholly avoid.

Listen, my heart, in his flute is the music of the  
smell of wild flowers, of the glistening leaves and  
gleaming water, of shadows resonant with bee's wings

The Moon steals his smile from my friend's lips  
and spreads it over my life.

That is, technically, one of the most beautiful things in the book. Yet even here we crave for the strict form, wondering perhaps whether the formal equivalent of the original would not be some exquisite piece of minute grandeur by Father John Tabb. And there is another reason for demanding verse. In verse we might learn these poems the more easily by heart. They are scarcely things to be read in a book. They are things to be drawn into the deepest privacy of the spirit and there brooded over, sung, and prayed in stillness and seclusion. In their English dress they are hard to learn by heart.

The mystery and the special quality of them is

that, being the words of a mystic, they are still poems of the common world we know. They are not the thoughts of a hermit or a monk in his cell. There is no renunciation of this world's beauty and homely detail. They take in the common life on their way to the truth that transcends it. It is natural that now and then the poet should sing his emancipation from the trivial claims and desires at the call of "the Eternal Stranger":

Now when a glad whirlwind has overthrown me  
in the dust, I laugh and roll on the earth at thy feet  
like a child; and should chant the new lightness  
and laughter of the freed spirit:

I care not to haunt the mouldy stillness, for I go  
in search of everlasting youth; I throw away all that  
is not one with my life nor as light as my laughter.

I run through time and, O my heart, in your  
chariot dances the poet who wings while he wanders.

The way to victory and freedom lies through defeat; this poet, like many another, is urgent to tell us that gain is utter loss; and yet there is no trace in him of the fear that runs away from this or that in life and denies beauty through mistrust of self. The key to all is love; and who shall say where human love ends and divine love begins? Something of the same acceptance is to be found in the narrower and lower-flying dreams of Rossetti: and curious instruction might be drawn from a study of the way in which Meredith approaches the same ideas from the opposite direction. But the very "human" and beautiful love-songs of Tagore not so much lead us towards as place us securely in the region of divine love; and the body shares in that pure and ultimate life of which the pilgrim is ever in search.

The joy ran from all the world to build my body.  
The lights of the skies kissed and kissed her till she  
woke

Flowers of hurrying summers sighed in her breath  
and voices of winds and water sang in her move-  
ments

The passion of the tide of colours in clouds and  
in forests flowed into her life, and the music of all  
things caressed her limbs into shape

She is my bride - she has lighted her lamp in my  
house.

"In my house" - in the house of me who am more than she is, but am incomplete without her. So this human world plays its part in the true life of which the poet celebrates the beauty and the joy, the life that faces and includes death. The process of living in the body is the process of preparing something perfect out of a precious material, to be imaged by flowers, music, light, which is known as life - a thing worthless "in the hands of the unmeaning hours", or when "squandered among the shadows", but of infinite worth in the hands of love.

The stories in "Hungry Stones" tell of many sides of modern Indian life and thought, and besides being very good stories are full of suggestive detail. Some are allegorical, some delightfully comic in their studies of character; at least one is more than a little disturbing in its revelation of what Indian people think about British rulers. In many of these stories Indian women are revealed in a manner that perhaps no one but an Indian writer could achieve. Through all of them runs, as one might expect, an understanding tenderness, which lights up the dark corners of the strangeness, which separates East from West, and brings the reader closer to the common humanity while exhibiting clearly the differences in spiritual and practical standard.

29 November, 1916

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p4c4(D)

**Section: CURRENT LITERATURE**

**HUNGRY STONES**

(MACMILLAN. 5s. net.)

Read in their original Bengali by those who have breathed the mystical atmosphere of the East, we can well believe that Sir Rabindranath Tagore's collected stories will make a strong appeal. In their translated form his tales, while undeniably original, lose some of their subtle charm, especially in the non-languorous age in which we at present live. Nevertheless, though its market may be restricted, this work of a distinguished Indian writer deserves recognition. It contains descriptive passages of rare vigour

and beauty, and, is embellished with imagery of a delicate and distinctive character. "Hungry Stones" is by no means the best of Tagore's bunch, however much of its central idea - that of a palace, symbolical of unrequited passion and unsatisfied longing, whose stone steps devour every intruder - may grip the imagination. It is too loosely constructed, its motif too deeply masked, for the average English reader to follow with sustained interest.

In some of his other stories, such as "Vision" or "The Victory", especially the former Sir Rabindranath touches a higher point. His study of a doctor's wife, who, loosing her sight through the selfishness of her husband, yet retains a fresh love and a faith unbroken, is finely conducted its moral sure and sacred. Few writers have conceived a story which proves more strikingly that those whom a sudden gust of passion brings down to the dust can rise up again with a strong impulse for goodness, while those who by some outer parasitic growth choke out their inner life reach a paralysis which knows no healing. "The Devotee" is another story which should not be missed; since it interprets the religion of the East in a manner at once novel and arresting. We repeat that as studies of Bengali life most of these tales are weirdly engaging; as fiction they will not suit - and doubtless were not written to suit - all tastes.

8 December, 1916

#### THE DAILY CHRONICLE

p6c5(D)

#### Section: BOOK OF THE DAY

#### The Hun and Tagore

A literary item of news finds its way here from Germany, via America. It is that Rabindranath Tagore's play "Chitra," has recently been produced in Berlin. As those who have read it will know, it deals with the Feminist movement in India. Tagore must feel himself highly honoured by the unasked patronage of the Prussian. He will also recall the words of another poet "The Prussian eagle's beak is red."

8 December, 1916

#### MONTROSE STANDARD AND ANGUS AND MEARNS REGISTER

p6c2-3(W)

**Fruit-Gathering.** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. (London: Macmillan & Co.). 4. 6d.

The eighty-six poems in this volume from a sequel to the author's "Gitanjali (Song Offerings)," are translated by himself from the original Bengali. "Fruit-Gathering" shares its predecessor's distinctive qualities - a melodiously rhythmic prose, lofty and deep thinking, suggestive parable, and spiritual insight. Like others of Sir Rabindranath's productions, a great part of its value and fascination lies in its being an addition to the self-interpretation of Eastern mysticism, and a new avenue that is opened by an oriental to the heart and mind of the dreamy, metaphysical and intensely-religious East. By reason of both the assurance of authenticity implied by source, and the charm inseparable from the nature and spontaneous product of the East, it carries a student further than the most sympathetic exposition of the Western explorer, an intellectual foreigner and spiritual alien. The difference between a revelation of the Hindoo soul and mentality from within, and an interpretation of them by Western scholars from without is vast, although rather to be felt than defined in words. In "Fruit-Gathering" we have at once the product and the comment, the revelation and the key. It carries us to a realm beyond the confines of Occidental systems, where poetry, philosophy, metaphysics, and religion meet and mingle, each the fit counterpart and handmaid of the other, in the rarefied atmosphere of which our beings may labour for a space, but where at length comes a new sense of security and peace. Not everyone perhaps can breathe it, but happy he who, even measurably, can enjoy its stimulating purity upon the heights the poet serenely treads, communing with the Infinite and peering into the enveloping mysteries of being, purpose, and destiny. Anything so ethereal as the bulk of these song-offerings is not to be subjected to analysis but assimilated, and only so can their spiritualising effect be felt. It is true what he sings in No. XXIII.

"The poet's mind floats and dances on the waves of life amidst the voices of wind and water

"Now when the sun has set and the darkened sky draws down upon the sea, like drooping lashes upon a weary eye, it is time to take away his pen, and let his thoughts sink into the bottom of the deep amid the eternal secret of that silence."

He has gone where words are well-nigh meaningless, and the richest eloquence is silence. Meanings we can find, sometimes after tantalising chase, in such as the dialogue between the king and the saint Narohtam, and in the very beautiful conversation between the poet, Tulsidas, and the widow who, wishing to follow her dead husband to heaven, came to find him living with herself - "In my heart is my lord, one with me," said the woman," but there are others that elude the verbal mould of expository criticism. They must be left to steal like incense over the dreaming reader, and to carry him as it rises whither the poet points. Meanings, moreover, discover themselves in the dreaming, and there is the poet's unread letter for precedent.

"Let me hold it to my forehead and press it to my heart

"When the night grows still and stars come out one by one, I will spread it on my lap and stay silent.

"The rustling leaves will read it aloud to one, the rushing stream will chant it, and the seven wise stars will sing it to me from the sky

"I cannot find what I seek, I cannot understand what I would learn, but this unread letter has lightened my burdens and turned my thoughts into songs,"

So the most evasive of the poet's verse turns to singing, and what matter if the interpretation be not exactly correct, so long as the music be beautiful, and the song kindle thoughts of beauty? The main thing is to invite the poet's mood, to try to reach his thought by intuition, and "en rapport" with him to catch the effluence of his "Fruit-Gathering."

9 December, 1916

## THE INQUIRER

p594-595(W)

### A Wanderer in London Bookshops

[This is a collective review of books published in that year. Only the relevant paragraphs are cited here ]

... Leaving the work which has been directly inspired by the war and its call to heroism out of account, we have had several volumes of golden verse to add to the shelf which holds the books of W.B. Yeats, and William Watson and Rabindranath Tagore and other postulants for admission to the rank of the immortals ...

... A notice of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's new volume of poems "Fruit-Gathering" (Macmillan & Co., 4s. 6d. net.) has already appeared in these columns. There is no need to repeat words of praise. The wise will prove their truth by taking many of these short snatches of song, with their gem-like beauty, into their own hearts. His prose volume "Hungry Stones and Other Stories" has its roots in the same world. They are not merely tales. Like Tolstoy's short stories they contrive to be parables of spiritual things without losing their tender human appeal.

9 December, 1916

## THE IRISH TIMES

p8c5-6(D)

### TAGORE'S POEMS\*

The coming into English literature of the work of Sir Rabindranath Tagore was the occasion for enthusiastic encomiums being showered upon it. His unusual and naive vision struck chord until then ushered in these islands. His verse form, too, had an archaic appeal. It was said the mind of the inscrutable East was being expressed in the language of the West, that muscular English was being used in a subtle way to teach the delicate traceries of thought from the mind of an oriental

\*"Fruit-Gathering" by Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan, 4/6.

Zogi. In Tagore's latest volume the poems have the appeal one has learned to expect. Their naivety is, however, less alluring. His "Songs like birds from the lonely land of snow are winging to build their nests in my heart against the warmth of its April, and I am content to wait". These words from one of his poems suggest his beautiful, delicate thought. They also indicate, perhaps, why the work now before us does not captivate our attention so completely as the earlier poems. Tagore's allegiance to what seems to be his own verse-form has become a trifle monotonous. The negation of rhyme and metre as we know it, which at first gave his poems and effect of weird simplicity, has become a stumbling block. Still the present volume is full of beautiful thoughts, poetic themes:-

"I ran through time and, O my heart, in your chariot dances the poet who sings while he wanders".

Tagore's work is still a joy and an inspiration, but we doubtless are suffering disenchantment by familiarity.

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9 December, 1916

**THE OUTLOOK (Christmas Supplement)**

p571(W)

**Section: FAIRY TALES**

**Hungry Stones, by Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 5s. net.) -**

There is a sumptuous Eastern touch about these stories which have been so picturesquely translated from the original Bengali by various writers. They are not strictly fairy-tales, but they are so fanciful as almost to come under that category. And they have the same poignant inevitability as a fairy-tale. It is difficult to think of a more beautiful or a sadder story than "My Lord, the Baby". It reads like an old ballad and has the same tragic directness as a tale from the Old Testament. English readers are under a real debt of gratitude to the translators of these haunting stories.

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12 December, 1916

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p5c2(D)

**HUNGRY STONES AND OTHER STORIES** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp.vii. 271. 5s. net.

There is a pleasing, gentle and wise satire in these stories, and in one of them is a picture, which might have stood as preface to the series, of a boy running to his grandma and demanding a story beginning "Once there was a King." And Sir Rabindranath comments: "When we were young we understand all sweet things, we could detect the sweets of a fairy story by an unerring science of our own. We never cared for such useless things as knowledge. We only cared for truth." Accordingly, fables and fairy tales as these stories are, they are all true, every word of them, that is to say, they compel belief, the breathless, enthralled belief that comes from the satisfaction of the story-telling instinct. This is by far and away the best means of arriving at or near the truth, for story-telling calls into play certain rare and agile faculties which in ordinary affairs are left dormant. The exercise of them produces an exhilaration and a clarity of mind such as can be achieved in no other way. It was consciousness of these faculties that made Schiller declare that the poet is your only man. Tagore is a poet of a certain linked sweetness, and he is a teacher, and he tells stories with no show of art whatever "Once there was a king" - that, as he says, is the truth, and what follows is embroidery upon it. The king, of course, in the world of truth, was a poet, and his adventures were enthralling, and remain so in whatever form they be cast. But Tagore is also a thinker and a moralist, and must allow for the fact that life is choked with unsatisfied desires. He touches this fact and it becomes a fable in which unsatisfied desires and hungry longings are expressed and therefore released. The stones of a house cry out for the life that was not lived in it, and they claim as victims all the unsatisfied who enter. It is a good fable, but even better is that of the Kingdom of Cards, which must surely have grown out of impressions of England. A real king enters that somnolent island, and brings to it love and music:- "There was a remarkable stillness in the

Kingdom of Cards. Satisfaction and contentment were complete in all their rounded wholeness. There was never any uproar or violence. There was never any excitement or enthusiasm." But the young Prince came, and with him love, and in the end he found a Bride," and the citizens are not longer regulated according to the Rules, but are good or bad, according to their *Ichha*. So with extraordinary gentleness truth is reached satirically, and the wisdom of Tagore is a good Roland for the Oliver of our Kipling.

G.C.

15 December, 1916

**MONTROSE STANDARD AND ANGUS AND MEARNS REGISTER**

p6c2-3(W)

**HUNGRY STONES AND OTHER STORIES.**

**By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Translated from the Original Bengali by Various Writers. (London: Macmillan & Co.) 5s.**

These stories make a strange medley to a western reader. "Hungry Stones" is like the fantastic, confused dream of an opium-eater, but may be described as a ghost story; "Vision" is a love story, a romance; "Living or Dead?" is a fantasy; "The Victory" is "sui generis" the tale of a poet's contest intermingles with love, disappointed ambition, and death; others introduce the element of caste; and domestic affection is the sweet savour of many- "The Cabuliwallah," "My Lord, the Baby," and "The Home-coming". There is much pathos in the majority, and now and again a gentle humour, but more of sorrow than of laughter, and they are admirably told. Only a poet could have written "The Victory," and from it we make one paraphrase and extract. It tells of Shekhar, court poet of King Narayan of Amarapur, who loves the unseen Princess Arjita, and is himself loved by her maid Manjari. In the royal hall, where he recited his new compositions to Narayan, was a screened balcony, where hidden hearers could listen, and if a shadow crossed the screen "he was sure it was Arjita's", and "sent up his song to the starland out of his reach"; and, should a tinkling sound reach his ear, it would set him dreaming of the anklets whose golden bells

sang at each step. Arjita was his inspiration, his unknown ideal, and he found a theme in Krishna, the lover god, and Radha, the beloved, the Eternal Man and the Eternal Woman, the sorrow that comes from the beginning to time and the joy without end. And his songs were in the hearts and on the lips of all. Anon comes Pundarik, a minstrel from the south, who challenges all the poets of Amarapur to a tournament of the Muse, and Shekhar heard from the arena. On the second day of the contest this was the purport of his song:-

"It was of that day when the pipings of love's flute startled for the first the hushed air of the Vrinda forest. The shepherd women did not know who was the player, or whence came the music. Sometimes it seemed to come from the heart of the south wind, and sometimes it seemed to come from the straying clouds of the hill-tops. It came with a message of tryst from the land of the sunrise, and it floated from the sunset with its sigh of sorrow. The stars seemed to be the stops of the instrument that flooded the dreams of the night with melody. The music seemed to burst all at once from all sides, from fields and groves, from the melting blue of the sky, from the shimmering green of the grass. They neither knew its meaning nor could they find words to give utterance to the desire of their hearts. Tears filled their eyes, and then life seemed to long for a death that would be its consummation.

"Shekhar forgot his audience, forgot the trial of his strength with a rival. He stood alone amid his thoughts, that rustled and quivered round him like leaves in a summer breeze, and sang the Song of the Flute. He had in his mind the vision of an image that had taken its shape from a shadow, and the echo of a faint tinkling sound of a distant footstep."

Pundarik, however, won the pearl chain of triumph, and going home Shekhar made a pyre of his songs, drank poison, and was dying when Arjita came and crowned him with a garland of flowers from her own neck, the crown of victory. As it touched his hair he fell stricken by death. Not more beautiful, but more eerily impressive, more tragically suggestive, more vividly pictorial, and more dramatically powerful is the title story. The stones are those of the old palace of Barich, built close to the Susta river, two hundred and fifty years ago, by the Emperor Mahmood Shah II

for his pleasure and luxury. It was memories of young Persian damsels sitting in its spray-cooled rooms their hair dishevelled before bathing, splashing their soft, masked feet in the reservoirs, and singing their vineyard ghazals to the music of the guitar. Their ghosts still haunt the palace, as though it were a spirits' prison, and visions more dreadful appeared to the narrator. An old servant tells him of unrequited passions, unsatisfied longings, and flames of wild blazing pleasures of long ago clung to the place, and that the curse of all the heart-aches and blasted hopes had made its every stone thirsty and hungry, eager to swallow up like a famished ogress any living man who might approach." Hence the title "Hungry Stones". Only one had escaped, and that at the cost of reason. It is a weird tale of the unearthly, savouring of the Celtic as much as of the oriental imagination. More winning, because deeply imbued with the human affection that makes the East and West akin, is "Cabuliwallah," and it is only one of several. The volume has this further quality, that like "Fruit Gathering," it opens another way to the understanding of the genius of the East. Its appeal, moreover, is wide, its range extending from the tragedy, of "Living or Dead?" to the exquisite tenderness of "My Lord, the Baby."

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19 December, 1916

**THE DAILY CHRONICLE**

p6c4(D)

### VISIONS IN VERSE

[In this column reviews of four books of verse - one paragraph to each - are included. The books under review are "Fruit-Gathering" by Tagore, "Lustra" by Pound, "Delight" by Phillpotts and "Collected Poems" by Davies. Only the relevant paragraph is included.]

The Gathering which here presents is, like his previous harvests, the Fruit of a deeply spiritual mind. There are 86 prose-poems of highest level in thought and word, speaking from soul to soul a message of true wisdom. A sequel to "Gitanjali", it is equally profound with that notable Indian gift.

22 December, 1916

**THE NATION**

p448(W)

### Section : REVIEWS

### THE DISCOVERY OF INDIA

**"HUNGRY STONES AND OTHER STORIES". By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan. 5s. Net.) "FRUIT-GATHERING." By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan. 5s. 6d. Net.)**

There remains to be written a rather important chapter in the history of India - its discovery by the English people. It remains unwritten for the best of all reasons. It is still an event of the future. None the less each generation has made its own attempt upon the veil. This event happens, we suspect, for each of us at a comparatively early age. India is for every English boy the region of romance, and if the historian of our dealings with the Indian people ever means to go to the root of the matter, he will ask himself at each phase of our policy, what notions of India had the Anglo-Indians then ruling framed for themselves between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one? One generation was reared on the essays of Macaulay. Another must have formed itself in the pervading Indian atmosphere that colours half the work of Thackeray. For Thackeray the English ruling class was first of all the class which sent soldiers and collectors to India. The modern period begins, we suspect, with Max Muller, and after him came Kipling, and at length Tagore. It happened to us in our school-days that we read Max Muller with immense avidity. He set us dreaming continually of India. He made our horizon for us with his revelations of the origin of the Aryan languages and the primitive structure of Aryan society. We conceived from his pages an almost oppressive veneration for the intellect of the Hindoo race, and the traditions of the Brahman caste. We visualized the difficulty of British rule in India in terms of the contrast between our practical outlook on life and their profound metaphysical vision. We recollect a moment of awe-stricken modesty when our schoolmaster tried to dazzle our ambition with the Indian Civil Service. We did not feel in ourselves in subtlety and in the depth of

intellect required to rule this race of philosophers and saints. The impression, as notions fixed in early youth are apt to be, was lasting. We tried very hard to read the Vedas. We endeavoured to master Indian systems of logic and metaphysics. We turned hopefully to Fergusson's nonunimentional books on Indian architecture. The result was invariably disappointing, and from the poems, the systems and the buildings we always rose with a sense of confusion and bewilderment. In all of them it was precisely the power of the shaping and constructive intellect which seemed to be wanting. Opulence, variety, subtlety, detail, there were in abundance, but never the compelling, masterful power of creative reason. We were baffled, but we clung to the conviction that the failure to appreciate was a fault in our own Western make-up. Everyone agreed that Indians are sages and metaphysicians.

At last we dare to revise this Late-Victorian belief. The suspicion dawns upon us that the singularity of the Indian mind may lie not at all in any overpowering intellectual gift, but, on the contrary, on its emotional side. We have found the clue in these tales by Sir Rabindranath Tagore. They are admirable tales, varied and in many manners, and all of them are told with sure and delicate art. But it is not the discovery of a new artist of short stories which matters most. The big event is the revelation by an Indian of Indian modes of feeling. In all of these tales, some romantic, some decorously comic, some gently satiric, and others tragic and moving, the arresting thing is less the art of the writer than his revelation of the delicacy and power and purity of Indian emotion. We do not mean to undervalue the art, but it does not strike us as characteristically Indian. We should doubt whether short stories at all like these were written in Bengali before the study of Western models. The manner and technique are only faintly exotic, and while they did not pointedly recall any English practitioner of the short story, they often reminded us of Daudet, and suggested a familiar nineteenth century attitude which was rather French than English. The people of the tales, however, are neither English nor French nor anything in the least European. Universal humanity there is, to be sure, in the sense that we can readily understand these people, and like them. But there is not one tale which could be "adapted," so to speak, for the English stage, and

it is not climate or institutions which would baffle the adapter, but simply this delicacy and simplicity and intensity of feeling which one finds in no Western fiction - not even in Russian fiction, half-Eastern though it is.

If Englishmen have not suspected that this emotional refinement and power were the characteristics of Indian life, the reason is, we suppose, that the home life of India was closed to us, partly by our own prejudices and partly by the Zenana. Most of these stories turn on the relations of men and women, generally of husband and wife. In one the complication is caused by polygamy, in another by caste, and in a third by the peculiar devotion felt to the spiritual teacher (the guru). But all this strange environment serves only to illustrate the beauty and spiritual delicacy of the Hindoo woman's modes of acting and feeling. It is hard to illustrate the point without actually telling the stories - a detestable practice in a review. But no one instance would suffice. The thing runs all through the book, in the manner of speech of these women, as well as in what they do, in their attitude towards each other, as well as in their dealings with men. None of them are described as "educated" in the Western sense; none of them are "intellectuals"; all of them are leading the correct Eastern home life behind the veil. The author nonetheless ascribes to them a keenness of spiritual vision and a sensitiveness which in the West would be found only in rare exceptions. Probably Mr. Bertrand Russell was right when he said that while the ideal life of comradeship and equality of the future between men and women may be beautiful, the definitely accepted notion of subjection and devotion which once was ours, and is still the East's, is much more beautiful than anything that belongs to the stages of transition and struggle. But this general sense of kindness and refinement, with a power of unselfish devotion, goes far beyond the relations of men and women. Three of the stories show various phases of the Indian love for children, and illustrate it with wonderful charm. These people are evidently not intellectual giants, but they have a quick, natural gift of emotion which makes our Western life of the feelings seem crude and poor, and a little vulgar by comparison.

"All this pure fallacy," the reader may object, "you mistake a poet's picture of life for life itself. The delicacy is in Tagore, and not in his coun-

trymen." The same question occurred to us at every page. But, in the first place, Tagore is not an isolated mind which made itself. He is a product of Indian civilisation. In the second place, poets are not given over-much, when they turn to real life, to painting it in colours of unreal beauty. They commonly ask so much from the world that they find the real ugly and unsatisfying. From Shelley to Rupert Brooke there is hardly one modern English poet who would have painted English men and women in such colours, if he had written prose tales. Wordsworth alone might have done it, and then only for peasants. Moreover, there are in two or three of these tales signs that Tagore can adopt a shrewdly humorous attitude towards life. His gentle satire at the expense of a Hindoo magnate who licked the boots of English officials has a sense for the weaknesses of men, without a touch of cynicism, which reminds us of Daudet. The satire on the island of cards is also the work of a man by no means disposed to idealize reality unduly. We incline to think that the real discovery of India may come from such work as this. If there are more novels and tales of this quality in the Indian vernaculars, the translation of them would be the greatest of all steps towards a comprehension by the West of the East. An enlightened government would subsidize a publisher to do it -

but we can hardly suppose that a subsidy would be needed. This book is so fresh so living, and so attractive that even without the author's great reputation it would have stood out in any list of fiction.

We have left ourselves little space in which to speak of the new volume of Tagore's poems. They have all his customary grace and spiritual insight. They impressed us we confess, less than his first volume, for his manner seems to become slighter and more indefinite, and the likeness of poem to poem is so great that when one has read a few one seems to have read all. What lingers in the memory when one closes the book is not any one poem, or even single phrases, but a vague and beautiful sense of an attitude towards life. That pervades "Fruit-gathering" like its predecessors, fragrant, intangible and a little formless, like the scent of an invisible flower. Once more it is not intellect that India gives to the world, but emotion.

27 December, 1916

**THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST**

p4c3(D)

### INDIAN POEMS AND STORIES\*

Sir Rabindranath Tagore's "Fruit-Gathering" is a sequel to "Gitanjali," and, like its predecessor, mainly consists of religious poems dealing with relation between the individual soul and the Eternal. Continually reading those poems we are reminded of passages in the gospel, in Tennyson, and in Wordsworth, whose similar religious and philosophical thoughts are expressed. He who follows the Master, we read, "does not glide by the shelter of the bank. He spreads a wreckless sail to the wind and rides the turbulent water. He does not stay to count his gain or to mourn his loss." This is the self-same spirit of devotion which was required of the apostles of Christ. The terrible anger of the eternal is manifested "in the thunder-storm, in the shower of blood, in the angry red of the sunset," as when, at the end of Tennyson's "Vision of Sin," "God made Himself an awful rose of dawn." When the Indian poet declares, "Not for me is the love that knows no restraint, but like the foaming wine that, having burst its vessel, in a moment would run to waste," he is expressing the same sentiment as Wordsworth inculcates in his "Laodamia." When his heart hears in his friend's flute "the music of the smell of wild flowers, of the glistening leaves and gleaming water, of shadows resonant with bees wings," we compare it with the guitar that Ariel (Shelley) gave to Miranda echoing

"The softest notes of falling rills,  
The melodies of birds and bees,  
The murmuring of summer seas,  
And pattering rain and breathing dew."

Many such parallels could be adduced to show that Sir Rabindranath Tagore is akin in soul to the great thinkers and poets of the west, although he traces his literary and philosophical ancestry

\*Fruit-Gathering By Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan). 4s. 6d. net. - Hungry Stones and Other Stories. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan). 5s. net.

to the Upanishads, and such Indian prophets as Kabir, Govinda, and Buddha. In "Fruit-Gathering," as in his previous English prose poems, the author shows a command of English most remarkable in an Oriental. The verses of his poems resemble in the distinction and classical finish of their style what we admire in Landor's "Imaginary Conversations" and in the prayer book version of the Psalms. Their symbolic imagery is often exquisitely beautiful. On page 84 there is a charming picture of the Indian child wife who runs wild about the palace and tries to make a plaything of her husband. "She heeds not when her hair tumbles down and her careless garment drags in the dust." The story of the ascetic and the dancing girl on page 51 is a fine picture of the pathetic contrasts in Indian life. But generally a deficiency of distinct human figures is noticeable in the poems. Most of them are expressive only of the typical religious man searching for the light of Heaven. The great war now raging forms the subject of only one poem "The Oarsmen," in which all the black evils in the world that have now overflowed their banks and traced to "the cowardice of the weak, the arrogance of the strong, the greed of fat prosperity, the rancour of the wronged, pride of race, and insult to man." The poem ends with an intimation of immortality. "If the Deathless dwell not in the heart of death," then we are asked to explain "whence comes the hope that drives these men from their homes like stars rushing to their death in the morning light."

Those who find want of ordinary human interest in Sir Rabindranath's poems may repair the omission by turning to his "Hungry Stones and Other Stories," which give vivid pictures of Indian life and character. The first story "Hungry Stones," has appeared before, translated by Ranjan Sen in his "Glimpses of Bengal Life." It is a weird record of a deserted palace haunted by tragic memories of a young Persian girl who lived in the pleasure dome. The reader is tantalised by an abrupt termination, which leaves the mystery unexplained. Then follow a variety of sketches of characteristic incidents and complications in Hindu social and religious life, which should afford an agreeable

change to readers surfeited with the rather monotonous fare provided by our magazines of fiction. Perhaps the best story in the book is the last, entitled "The Cabuliwalah." It is both humorous and pathetic - humorous when it deals with the strange link of friendship between a little girl and a burly Afgan - pathetic when the Afgan reappears on her wedding day after many years' imprisonment for a murderous assault.

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31 December, 1916

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

p5c2(S)

### **"HUNGRY STONES"**

The literary reputation of Sir Rabindranath Tagore needs no trumpeting to-day and the collection of his tales from the Bengali which he and others have translated under the style of "Hungry Stones and Other Stories" (Macmillan, 5s. net.) seems to show that in order to understand Indian life and manners and frames of mind one must go to an Indian author of education and accomplishment. Kipling and Mrs. Steel have taught us much, but it is only in such stories are to be found in this book, addressed to native readers and not framed according to English art conventions, that one gains real admission to the domestic interior of Hindustan, enters the thoughts of an Indian child, appreciates what marriage and marital relations are in our great dependency and penetrates to the heart of the Indian woman. There is a tenderness about Sir Rabindranath Tagore's attitude when he approaches a young child or a faithful wife that stirs Western sympathies, and when, as in "Vision", he handles such a theme as a wife who is childless and blind is command of pathos carries all before it. The author's tales, however, are not all domestic studies. Some are almost fairy stories, one or two are fantasies, displaying characteristic Oriental imagination, and now and again he pokes sly satire at the native who toadies to and imitates his English rulers.

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1917

2 January, 1917

**THE TIMES**

p12c5(D)

## **SIR R. TAGORE IN JAPAN**

### **WESTERN CIVILIZATION DENOUNCED**

The January number of *The East and the West*, a quarterly review for the study of missionary problems (B.P.G.), contains an article on Sir Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Japan last year. It is written by the Rev. L.B. Cholomondeley, Chaplain to the British Legation in Tokyo, who quotes from one of the addresses delivered by the poet to a large gathering of Japanese students, in which European civilization is vehemently denounced and its vital ambition described as being "to have the exclusive possession of the Devil." An earnest appeal is made to Japan to reject "the spirit of the civilization which is sowing broadcast over all the world seeds of fear, greed, suspicion, unashamed lies of its diplomacy, and unctuous lies of its profession of peace and good will and universal brotherhood of man." The lecturer apparently sees little in Europe that is to be commended to Orientals. Thus he adds:-

I ask you to have the strength of faith and clarity of mind to know for certain that the lumbering structure of modern progress, riveted by the iron bolts of efficiency, which runs upon the wheels of ambition, cannot hold together for long. A day will come when it will fall into a heap of ruin.. Do we not see signs of this even now? Does not the voice come to us through the churning up of the unspeakable filth which has been accumulating for ages in the bottom of this civilization -the voice which cries to our soul that the tower of national selfishness, which goes by the name of patriotism, which has raised its banner of treason against heaven, must totter and fall with a crash, weighed down by its own bulk, its flag kissing the dust, its light extinguished?

Among other articles attention may be directed

to Bishop Montgomery's account of the St. Louis Convention of the American Episcopal Church, held last autumn, at which the Bishop attended as one of the invited representatives of the Church of England. The Editor (Cannon C. H. Robinson) continues his interesting contribution on The Conversion of North Germany."

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5 January, 1917

**THE GAZETTE (HARROW)**

p6c1(W)

### **"FRUIT-GATHERING"**

**By Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan and Co., 4s. 6d. net.).**

I have reviewed all the previous volumes of Tagore that have appeared in English, some twelve in number, and have joy in calling attention to this new book entitled "Fruit-Gathering". It is in the same style and is a sequel to "Gitanjali". Very tender and suggestive are the thoughts here given expression to in poetic phraseology. Sir Rabindranath sees deeply into the human heart and reveals its noblest impulses and desires. One is always helped by the sayings of such a book as this. They contain instruction and good cheer. The best thing I can do now is to quote quite freely. Here is a passage which shows us what love can do:

"I woke and found his letter with the morning.  
I do not know what it says, for I cannot read. Let me hold it to my forehead and press it to my heart  
I cannot find what I seek, I cannot understand what I would learn: but this unread letter has lightened my burdens and turned my thoughts into songs"

Here is a passage teaching some truth to everybody:

"You hide your treasure in the palm of your hand, and we cry that we are robbed. But open and shut your palm as you will, the gain and the loss are the same. At the game you play with your own self, and you lose and win at once".

Take another passage:

"What music is that in whose measure the world is rocked? We laugh when it beats upon the crest of life, we shrink in terror when it returns into the dark. But the play is the same that comes and goes with the rhythm of the endless music"

And take still another passage which is a cry for friendship:

"When the weariness of the road is upon me, and the thirst of the sultry day; when the ghostly hours of the dusk throw their shadows across my life, then I cry not for your voice only, my friend, but for your touch. Put out your hand through the night, let me hold it and feel it, and keep it; let me feel its touch along the lengthening stretch of my loneliness"

Many such sayings are in this book. It is a "Fruit-Gathering" of a very precious kind.

13 January, 1917

**THE NEW STATESMAN**

p356(W)

### BENGALI STORIES

**Hungry Stones. By Sir RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Macmillan. 5s.**

These are beautiful stories, new stories, and when the reader has finished them he knows he will be glad some day to read them again. Now, when in conversation a person recommends a book of stories in this fashion, as often as not he tries to retell one or two of them; and a reviewer may do worse than follow that uncritical method too.

Raicharan was twelve years old when he came to the house of a native magistrate. He was one of the same caste as his master, and when after a good many years a boy was born in the house, Raicharan became a nurse. He became a devoted nurse. The rainy season was almost over, though the waters were still out, when one afternoon he took the baby out in the go-cart. The child was attracted by some flowers, and while Raicharan

left him to get them the child got out of the cart and toddled down to the flood. When Raicharan looked round the child was gone. For a moment the whole world swam round before his eyes. He gave one piercing cry and then began running up and down shouting "Master, Master, little Master"; but there was no answer, only the river ran on with its splashing, gurgling noise as before... The parents were wild with grief, and the distracted mother took it into her that Raicharan had stolen her child. "Why on earth should he commit such a crime as that?" said her husband; but the mother only replied, "Who knows?" So Raicharan went back to his village in disgrace.

Soon afterwards his own wife gave birth to a son and died. At first he was too heart-broken to pay attention to his baby – indeed, he rather hated it; but when it began to crawl about and laugh... well, sometimes his heart would begin to thump wildly, its voice and gestures seemed so like his little Master's. Gradually a strange idea took possession of his mind; this child was his little Master come back to him, and he said to himself, with amazement, "The mother's heart was right. She knew I had stolen her child". Remorse did not, however, lead him to take it back (perhaps he feared to shatter what he knew was only a delightful dream), but he devoted himself to it body and soul. He melted down his wife's trinkets to buy the boy just such a fine coat as his little Master had worn, and when it was time for the boy to go to school, Raicharan sold his piece of land and went out again as a servant. He would live himself on a handful of rice to dress him well and give him the best education, saving often to himself. "Ah! my little you loved me so much that you came back to my house. You shall not suffer through neglect of mine" Years passed, and in spite of inching and pinching, money began to run short. Raicharan's services no longer fetched what they used to do, for he was older and he had half-starved himself. The boy had never regarded him as his father, for though Raicharan showed the tenderness of a father towards him, his manner was always that of a servant. At last it was clear that he could pay no longer, and the boy, too, was of an age when he began to grumble about his clothes and ask for money. So Raicharan made up his mind.

One evening, when the magistrate, his old master, was resting after his day's work, he was told a man wished to speak to him. It was Raicharan, who presently asked if he might make obeisance to his mistress. She did not receive him so kindly, but Raicharan took no notice of this. "It was not the river that stole your baby", he said presently; "it was I," and the next day he came leading the boy by the hand. When the magistrate saw how eagerly his wife clung to the boy, he hardly pressed for proofs as closely as his profession taught him to do. Besides, where could an old fellow like Raicharan get such a boy from? "You must not stay here", he said severely. "O let him stay," cried his wife; "my child will be pleased". But the magistrate was firm: "No, Raicharan you cannot be forgiven for what you have done". The old man threw himself at his feet. "Master, let me stay. It was not I who did it. It was God". "I cannot trust you any more", said the magistrate. Raicharan rose to his feet and said again, "I did not do it". "Who was it then?" Raicharan replied, "It was my fate" But this was not taken as an excuse. The boy himself was not at all surprised to find that he was after all of rich parentage, but at first he was angry with Raicharan for having kept him so long out of his heritage. Then seeing the old man's distress, he said: "Father, forgive him. If he does not live with us, let him have at least a little pension". Raicharan did not say another word after hearing this. He looked for the last time on the face of his son, bowed, and went out. At the end of the month some money arrived for him at his village; but there was no one there of the name of Raicharan.

These are beautiful stories, new stories, and when the reader has finished them he knows he will some day be glad to read them again.

20 January, 1917

**THE SOUTHPORT GUARDIAN**

pllc1-2(2W)

## YEATS AND TAGORE

### TWO MYSTICS - EAST AND WEST

**"REVERIES OVER CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH",**  
by **WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS** (Macmillan, 6/-net).

**"RESPONSIBILITIES, AND OTHER POEMS",** by  
**WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS** (Macmillan, 6/-net).

**"HUNGRY STONES AND OTHER STORIES",** by  
**SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE** (Macmillan, 5/-net).

**"FRUIT-GATHERING",** by **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE** (Macmillan, 4/6-net).

[Only the relevant portion is reproduced]

Yeats and Tagore are complementary literary forces. They are both mystics and symbolists. What Yeats is to Ireland and the West, Tagore is to Bengal and the East. The still small voice, the hidden symbolism, the haunting fragrance are features of the work of each. It is not every reader who can appreciate their spell, or who can find their secret. They touch the folk tales of their respective countries with genius and with art; poetry and prose are alike dignified by their treatment. One of the greatest gifts Mr. Yeats has made to literature is his discovery of Tagore; to his introduction, indeed, the Western world owes that rich mine of suggestion which Tagore's work contains. The other great gift of Mr. Yeats to literature is himself. So in those four books we can examine in prose and in verse something of the distinctive value of each of these two writers - perhaps the two most distinctive and formative forces in modern poetry.

So "Reveries" and "Responsibilities" reflect Mr. Yeats' sensitiveness, to impressions, to change, to moods; he is still the apostle of beauty, of fatalism, of mysticism; and his motto, as expressed in the "Reveries" runs thus: "All life weighed in the scale of my own life seems to me a preparation for something that never happens". Mr. Yeats is his own best critic.

...Tagore, too, is suffering a literary development. In "Fruit-Gathering" we have a collection of poems in the same key and style as the famous and popular "Gitanjali", to which it is a sequel. Here the note of philosophy, of thanksgiving and of song-offering is expressed with that plaintive picturesqueness, that wealth of simile and suggestion, and that freshness of phrase that distinguish Tagore's work. In "The Oarsmen", one of the more ambitious poems, we have a new and striking account of the journey of death: in several of the poems we see how travel is widening Tagore's horizon, and the frequent references to the "moaning sea" and the "homeless tide", as well as to the "flowing river", are suggestive: but the chief charm of the songs still rests in their simple outpouring of the human heart; such poems as the three opening Fruit-gathering songs - the third running:

"Is summer's festival only for fresh blossoms and  
not also for withered leaves and faded flowers

"Is the song of the sea in tune only with the  
running waves?

"Does it not also sing with the waves that fall?

"Jewels are woven into the carpet where stands  
my king, but there are patient clouds waiting to be  
touched by his feet

"Few are the wise and the great who sit by my  
master, but he has taken the foolish in his arms and  
made me his servant for ever"

The exquisite love songs, the lament, "O, Pain  
of Love" (No. XXIV), and the song, typical of India:

"The day that stands between you and me makes  
her last boy of farewell

"The night draws her veil over her face, and  
hides the one lamp burning in my chamber.

"Your dark servant comes noiselessly and spreads  
the bridal carpet for you to take your seat there  
alone with me in the wordless silence till the night  
is done"

In "Hungry Stones", however, Tagore breaks new  
ground. He is here not the poet; not the philosopher,  
but the story-teller, touching his tales with philosophy  
and symbol and satire, making them something of fable  
and satire, making them something of fable and fairy tale,  
endowing them with all the al-

luring fragrance of the *Tales of the Arabian Nights*. Yet, though in the title story, for instance, there is all the glamour of the East, its colour, its sensuousness, its passion and its tragedy, the dominant note is one of symbolism; the deserted Persian Palace suffers an almost sinister re-incarnation; the modern collector of taxes is transported to the days of heroic adventure, because "at one time countless unrequited passions and unsatisfied longings and lurid flames of wild blazing pleasure raged within that palace, and that the curse of all the heartaches and blasted hopes had made its every stone thirsty and hungry". "The Devotee" gives us a glimpse of the fanaticism and fervour of the Hindoo character, its capacity for hero-worship, and the enthroning of the thinker, while the peculiar attitude of India, as also in equal degree of Russia, to the beggar, is perhaps explained in Tagore's dictum: "When we get our food precariously as alms we remember God the giver. But when we receive our food regularly at home as a matter of course, we are apt to regard it as ours by right". "Vision", too, is a touching domestic story of the drifting apart of a husband and wife, helped by the calamity of her blindness and his accession to wealth and luxury; yet saved from its tragic sequel and the new wife by a romantic miracle: here are two suggestive passages, the first peculiarly Oriental. "What lies we women have to tell! When we are mothers, we tell lies to pacify our children; when we are wives, we tell lies to pacify the fathers of our children. We are never free from this necessity"; the second, the tragedy of drifting, is more general in its incidence, "Those whom a sudden gust of passion brings down to the dust can rise up again with a new strong impulse of goodness. But those who, day by day, become dried up in the very fibre of their moral being; those who by some outer parasitic growth choke the inner life by slow degrees - such men reach one day a deadness which knows no healing". In "We Crown Thee King" we have a kindly satire of the struggle for a likely victim between the Anglo-Indians who tempt a Hindoo with social attentions and promised honours and the Congress party who so craftily appeal to his native patriotism; "Once there was a King", in its spirit and its opening phrase proclaims the perfect fairy story: it is a plea for fancy and not for precision, for spirit and not for names: "When we were young we understood all sweet things, and we could detect the sweets of a fairy by an

unerring science of our own. We never cared for such useless things as knowledge. We only cared for truth": and when the grandmother's story ends with death, the enraptured child's great question of the unknown arises in the inevitable. "What Then?" with which all fairy stories close, for "the child's faith never admits defeat, and it would snatch at the mantle of death itself to turn him back". "The Victory" is a tale of an Eastern journey, with poets as the combatants and not warriors, but with fair princesses bestowing the laurels to dying singers which kings have withheld; a romantic allegory, beautifully written. There is much wisdom and truth in these pages, the Oriental colour is applied with sureness and discretion, the moral values of the stories are artistically accented and the satire is at once kindly yet effective.

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28 January, 1917

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

p5c5(S)

**Section: RECENT VERSE**

### **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

'Fruit-Gathering' is the pregnant title of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's little volume of poetic musings (Macmillan., 4s. 6d. net) of which the meaning may be gathered from one of the earliest fragments:-

"My life when young was like a flower - a flower that loosens a petal or two from her abundance and never feels the loss when the spring breeze comes to beg at her door.

"Now at the end of youth my life is like a fruit, having nothing to spare, and waiting to offer herself, completely with her full burden and sweetness".

The writers who have attempted to convey in European tongues the glamour of Oriental thoughts and emotion are legion; there is none whose success is commensurable with that of Sir Rabindranath, and this little volume contains much of the best he has yet given us.

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31 January, 1917

**LIVERPOOL POST AND MERCURY**

p8c2(D)

### **INDIAN POETRY AND PROSE**

**FRUIT-GATHERING** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore.  
London: Macmillan and Co. 4s. 6d. net.

**HUNGRY STONES AND OTHER STORIES** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. 5s. net.

"Fruit-Gathering" is a new book of wonderful translations from Tagore's Indian poetry - translations carried out by the poet himself, and having all the spontaneity of first compositions. The soul of the mystic has rarely been more coherently expressed than in the lyrics of Tagore. Longing for harmony in life and for complete union with the spirit of love are the two central ideas in these poems, and to their interpretation Tagore brings a wonderfully delicate sense of beauty, and a wellnigh perfect repose of mind and concentration of purpose. Here in this war-shattered country it is difficult to concentrate the mind upon the aloof spirituality of these lyrics. They are almost a reproach to the thoughts that daily fill our minds, but one puts down the book strengthened by the vision of the essential and universal things.

In "Hungry Stones and Other Stories", Tagore is not an author but a compiler. The volume contains over a dozen stories, of which one only "The Victory" is translated by the poet himself. The rest are by various hands. These prose stories belong more to the everyday world of Indian life, but through them all there runs the golden thread of beauty and pathos. They are the garnered treasure of the humble in a land whose people are unworldly at heart. Even the confident young collector of cotton duties, so full of small-talk and alarmist theories, borrows a hint of mystery with the coming of night, when he tells his fellow-travellers the story of "The Hungry Stones". Some of these stories are full of humour, and all are valuable commentaries of contemporary Indian life. Here we read of an Indian wife who loves her husband even more devotedly after his carelessness has made her

blind, and of an Indian father who gladly sacrifices his good name and all that he has for the sake of a son who will be taught to despise him. This is the folk-lore of a people who, in all the ages of their being, have never grown old in spirit, and who perhaps, have undergone a spiritual rebirth as little children.

K.

3 February, 1917

### THE QUEEN, THE LADY'S NEWSPAPER

p140(W)

#### RECENT POETRY

**Fruit-Gathering, Hungry Stones.** By **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE** (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net)

*Fruit Gathering* contains Sir Rabindranath Tagore's poems on this war and many others, translated, of course, from Bengali. It is Sir Rabindranath's clear conviction that verse cannot be, anymore than Eastern music can be, translated into English rhythm. So, in their English dress, these poems are all in prose. It is, of course, the prose of a poet and a mystic; still, we must wish often for the original. But the pieces are lovely, of course, as every reader of *Gitanjali* will know. They are throbbing with that exquisitely passionate joy in earth and human loveliness, revealing these as one with the Divine.

In *Hungry Stones* Sir Rabindranath gives us tales of Indian life and thought on many sides. From the insight and the humour and the irony of them we learn - those of us who need to learn - how broad-based is the foundation out of which comes the true mystic.

7 February, 1917

### THE DAILY EXPRESS

p2c3(D)

#### Section: TO-DAY'S BOOK REVIEWS

#### EASTERN POETRY

**"Stray Birds".** By **Sir Rabindranath Tagore** (Macmillan 4s. 6d.)

From the parody\* to the original. It has been rather amusing after reading Mr. Squire's parody to read a new genuine Tagore poem. "Stray Birds" is characterised by the same gentle detached philosophy and the same felicity of expression as Sir Rabindranath's former books. He is always comforting, and to give comfort is to be a supreme benefactor of one's kind. Take the following, for example:-

"God grows weary of great kingdoms,  
but never of little flowers.

"Wrong cannot afford defeat,  
but Right can.

" 'I give my whole water in joy',  
sings the waterfall,  
'though little of it is  
enough for the thirsty!'"

14 February, 1917

### THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST

p3c2(D)

#### ENGLISH POETRY BY INDIAN WRITERS

Among the living poets who are likely to secure a permanent place of honour in the annals of English literature, two at least are natives of India. Sir Rabindranath Tagore of Bengal, and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, of Hyderabad, resemble each other in their enthusiasm for beauty and in their wonderful mastery of the English language. In other respects they differ widely, as may be seen from the poems they

\*The preceding review in this column is of "The Tricks of Trade" by J.C. Squire.

have published from time to time. In the first place, Sir R. Tagore's poems are written in prose like those of Walt Whitman, and like Hebrew poetry as it appears in the authorised version of the Bible, while Mrs. Naidu employs a great variety of metres. There is a corresponding difference between the outlook upon the world of the Indian poet and the Indian poetess. Sir R. Tagore is always spiritual and deeply contemplative. His poetry is distinguished by the artistic moderation which is the most striking characteristic of the literature of ancient Greece. Mrs. Naidu's poems, on the contrary, manifest the exuberant outpouring of passion and the intense love of brilliant, even 'lamboyant', colouring that is found in many poets of the romantic school.

Sir R. Tagore's new volume, "Stray Birds",\* is a collection of poetic aphorisms representing thoughts and feelings that have fitted through his mind from time to time, and now find expression in poetical prose by metaphor, simile, or illustration. Sometimes the simile is expressed in full as "Sorrow is hushed into peace in my heart like the evening among the silent trees". Sometimes only one side of the comparison is given. When we read that "it is the tears of the earth that keep her smiles in bloom", we have to trust to our own intelligence to supply the lesson suggested. Some of the aphorisms gain additional force of beauty by reminding us of favourite passages in English poets. If our Indian poet thinks that "the storm is like the cry of some god in pain whose love the earth refuses", we recall the great line of Keats in which he describes "music yearning like a god in pain". We hear "the still sad music of humanity" in "the world rushing on over the strings of the lingering heart making the music of sadness".

The aphorism declaring that "God's great power is in the gentle breeze, not in the storm" is strangely like the revelation of the *sibilus auræ tenuis* made to Elijah on Mount Horeb. Many of the aphorisms tenderly and beautifully treat of the teaching of sorrow and the preparation for death. Mrs. Naidu also devotes many of the poems in her new book to death and sorrow. There is less of joy of life in "The Broken Wing" than there was in "The Bird of Time" and "The Golden Thresh-

old". She shows the same remarkable mastery of complicated metres and of poetic imagery as won the appreciation of such critics as Mr. Arthur Symonds and Sir Edmund Gosse. Among English poets she reminds us most of Shelley and Swinburne in her lyric passion. It is interesting to notice a spirited song of hers, "If you call me", which is an Oriental counterpart of "Whistle and I will come to you my lad". Her poem on "The Magic of Spring" is irradiated by the "glows and glories" of India, where

The kinshuks burst into dazzling flower,  
The seemuls burgeoned in crimson pride,  
The palm-groves shone with the oriole's wing.

But even more charming, because more restful and more suffused with human sympathy, are the verses that take us from the anklet-bells, holding the ancient mystery of love, to the soft cattle-bells with their gracious memories of drowsy fields and weary labour's folded wing and finally to the deep temple-bells in whose importunate music dwells

Man's sad and immemorial cry  
That cleaves the dawn with wigs of praise,  
That cleaves the dark with wigs of prayer,  
Craves pity for our mortal ways,  
Seeks solace for our life's despair,  
And peace for suffering hearts that die.\*

19 February, 1917

**THE DAILY DISPATCH**

p4c5(D)

**Section: OUR LONDON DISPATCH**

### **The Tagore Boom**

Outstanding literary event of the war period is the discovery by the British public of the genius of the great Indian poet, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. A leading publisher informs me that Tagore's books are selling in this country like the proverbial hot cakes.

\*Stray Birds. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan.) 4s. 6d. net.

\*The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death, and Destiny, 1915-1916. By Sarojini Naidu. (Heinemann.) 5s. net.

One of them, "Gitanjali", has reached its thirty-seventh thousand, and the total number of his works sold to British readers is rapidly reaching one hundred thousand. The boom is only just beginning, as most of Tagore's writings were unknown here until recently. Before he won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, his fame was chiefly confined to India. Now at the age of fifty-five, after writing for more than thirty years, he is being acclaimed as one of the world's eight or ten greatest living poets.

Mr. W. B. Yeats, speaking of one of his books of verse, says that "I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics." Tagore writes novels and philosophic essays as well as poetry, and translates them from his own Bengali into English. His picturesque personality is well known in London. A man of arresting appearance he has often been seen in the London streets in oriental robes and turban. He has a long, flowing beard and moustache, a high forehead, flashing eyes, and clear cut Tennysonian features.

19 February, 1917

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p3c2(D)

## NEW BOOKS

### A POET IN TRANSLATION

**FRUIT-GATHERING. Pp. 123. STRAY BIRDS. Pp. 84. Both by Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. 4s. 6d. net. each.**

These volumes are representative of the manner with which Tagore's English admirers have now been familiar for nearly four years. To read through them is to be left with a curious impression that their author is a rare and beautiful spirit, perhaps even a great poet, against all the evidence of the books themselves. The difference in poetry between splendid success and almost ridiculous failure is, in definable terms, so slight a thing, so the turn of a phrase, that in translation the balance is almost

certain to swing against the achievement that comes not only from poetic energy working with the deftest native intimacy in idiom that is absorbed and cannot be learnt by design. Now and again a poet may draw his inspiration from a poem in a foreign tongue and make a new one in his own; otherwise to translate a poet is merely to pay him an amiable but dangerous compliment. Whether Tagore himself or another is responsible for these English versions of his work is not stated, but it must have been clear from the beginning that far oftener than not the English gives us nothing of that clear definition which is the very essence of poetry. The world of Tagore's vision, instead of being thrown up in the clear light which is the condition of poetry, however charged with fate it may be, is nearly always, for English readers, enveloped in a heavy vigour that is sometimes somnolent, sometimes active, but always shapeless. The failures of these versions are of many kinds. Sometimes we have more glibness that says nothing, as -

The echo mocks her origin to prove she is the original.

or -

Through the sadness of all things I hear the crooning of the Eternal Mother...

sometimes facile antithesis, which again is insignificant, as -

Roots are the branches down in the earth  
Branches are roots in the air ...

and then we have a rather pretentious hollowness, indeed a falsity of perception, as in

"The learned say that your lights will one day be no more", said the firefly to the stars.  
The stars made no answer.

and

"I have lost my dewdrop", cries the flower to the morning sky that has lost all its stars. .

and, finally, to give no other example, there is the merely journalistic metaphor, such as -

Rocket, your insult to the stars follows yourself  
back to earth.

In all these instances the failure is apparent enough. The notion of the morning sky stoically grieving for the loss of its starts is, for example, as it comes to us in English, a manifestly perverted imagination. And yet it is not difficult to feel behind even these failures a spirit that truly expressed would stir us to glad attention. When Tagore – or his translator for him – talks of that melodramatic silence of the stars we feel sure that he is not saying what it is in him to say. We can hear some far-off certainty of mood behind this destroying uncertainty of speech, and we think that good luck might at any moment bring a turn of the words that would catch that distant excellence, as it sometimes does.

I feel thy beauty, dark night, like that of the loved  
woman when she has put out the lamp.

Here is a beauty that is achieved often enough  
to show that its source is not chance; and a certain  
gnomic wisdom is yet less difficult to find, as -

If you shed tears when you miss the sun, you  
also miss the stars

and

Men are cruel, but man is kind...

though this last is probably yet more personal in its original. There are, moreover, a few exquisite and profound parables in "Fruit-Gathering" that can have come only from a creative mind of a high order. These, together with such rare but unequivocal beauties as have been mentioned, make it certain that in honouring Tagore the English public has honoured a great man, probably, as has been said, a great poet. But that his books in English are great books it is idle to pretend. The English people have bought nearly a hundred thousand of them in four years. It is to be hoped that they have bought them for few clear-cut excellences that tell us so surely of a great Indian poet who can speak to us only in a phrase here and there, and not for the mists of platitude into which his genius for the most part

falls in translation; but the number is suspiciously large. In "Stray Birds" number 263 is a repetition of number 98.

J.D.

19 February, 1917

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c3(D)

## POETRY

**STRAY BIRDS. BY Sir Rabindranath Tagore with a frontispiece by Willy Pogany, 4s. 6d. net. London: Macmillan & Co.**

Philosopher, fabelist and poet Sir Rabindranath Tagore interprets the modern East to the present-day West. In this latest volume from his pen we find a collection of epigrams and apothegms, which, though not clothed with metrical form, at least in the English version, possess a poetical content, and reveal strikingly the author's ability to penetrate behind the veil of outward appearance to the inner meaning of material and spiritual things. Some of the reflections are inspired by natural phenomena, such as the sun and moon, flowers and the trees, the rain, and the wind; others deal with abstractions such as friendship, silence, speech and death, while a number, which defy closer classification, embody practical admonitions and exhortations. Nothing is more difficult than to maintain a level standard of merit in a work of this kind, nor can it be said that even Sir Rabindranath Tagore succeeds always in avoiding the commonplace. Occasionally, also, the point of his epigram can be easily turned against him. For example, he says that "Men are cruel, but Man is kind" Is it not rather the case that "Man is cruel, but men are kind"? In the mass men are often far more ruthless than they are individually. When the author, again, says that "Man does not reveal himself in his history; he struggles up through it", he seems to create a false antithesis, the truth being that man reveals himself in his history in struggling up through it - two parts of the same statement, instead of two antithetical statements. However, the richness of this volume in thought and in imagery, in tracing poetical analogies

gies and in discovering apologies, in such as to yield pleasure and profit to the most fertile and enlightened minds.

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21 February, 1917

### THE DAILY CHRONICLE

p6c3(D)

#### Section: BOOKS OF THE DAY

##### The Vogue of Tagore

It is interesting to hear that Sir Rabindranath Tagore's most popular book in England is "Gitanjali" of which 37,000 copies have been sold. Next to it comes "The Gardener" with a sale of 14,000 copies, and then "The Crescent Moon" with 10,000 copies. A book on Tagore's famous school in India is being published by Macmillans.

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21 February, 1917

### THE ERA

p7(W)

#### Section: BOOK TALK

Two volumes of poems come to me from Messers Macmillan - "STRAY BIRDS", by Sir Rabindranath Tagore (4s. 6d. net), and "LIVELIHOOD", by Wilfred Wilson Gibson (3s. 6d. net). The first is poetry written in the form of prose, the second prose written in the form of poetry. In "Stray Birds", Tagore is at his very best, indeed, if he had not already created his "sensations" some years back, this would deservedly be the most-talked-of book of the season. There is such a spiritual quality about his latest philosophisings that to quote from them seems almost a sacrilege. It was men of the stamp of Tagore who wrote the Bible. But it will risk detaching half a dozen thoughts from the sequence of their context, in the hope that this may induce reader to buy, beg, borrow or steal the whole collection.

"If you shut your door to all errors, truth will be shut out"

"The roots below the earth claim no rewards for making the branches fruitful".

"We read the world wrong and say that it deceives us".

"The earth hums to me to-day in the sun, like a woman at her spinning, some ballad of the ancient time in a forgotten tongue".

"God's great power is in the gentle breeze, and not in the storm".

"Set the bird's wings with gold, and it will never again soar in the sky".

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24 February, 1917

### CAMBERWELL BOROUGH ADVERTISER

p8(W)

#### BOOKS THAT MATTER

By T. McC.

#### TAGORE: AN INDIAN POET

I have lately been reading the stories and poems of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. I do not think it is imputing any great lack of knowledge on the part of my readers if I presume that his name may be to some of them unfamiliar, and his poems and dramas unknown. Books of poetry have, in general, a limited circulation, but it is indubitable that the works of Tagore are meeting in the English reading world with a wide range of appreciation and acceptance. To judge from the publisher's (Macmillan) note on the fly-leaves, the frequent reprints testify to a wide circulation, and I should like in this article to still further help them if I can by introducing them to circles who may not know them, for they are certainly, in the best sense, Books that Matter.

It may seem strange in these times, when we are told of East and West that 'never the twain shall meet', that books of poetry and of dramatic story, originally written in Bengali, full of eastern imagery and fancy, strange analogies and similes, should be popular in good reading circles here.

But if we consider that the Bible, reckoned as literature, is full of the same conceptions in style and manner, and that few people have taken such a grip of Orientalism in language, speech and writings as the Saxon race of these islands, we may not perhaps wonder at it. Perhaps it may be that at the base of our racial nationality, the Celtic Aryan still reigns supreme, and forms the chief motor force of our mental and spiritual emotions. The Saxons' solidity may be but the veneer; the real – so indestructible is race – is the Celt of the aboriginal race, a race, as we know, so highly endowed with the poetic charm of life, with vivid, picturesque idealism and sensuous grasp, lovers of pure fresh nature, of the joy of living. And as the subconscious Celtic self asserts itself, it shows off the Saxon coating and finds its ancient mate in the thought and phantasy of the orient, whence, they say, the Celtic Aryans came. Such would be my interpretation of the problem: a remembrance of primal things, of far-off dream-visions of that imperial palace whence we came in days long since forgotten.

Thus some of Tagore's poems remind me of the Song of Solomon, of Heire, that Semitic "strayed reveller" in Oriental imagery and phantasy. But I find the closest and best resemblance to the style and imagery of Tagore in our own literature in the Celtic poems and prose dreams of Fiona Macleod. Thus, it is not to be wondered at – if such a theory hold ground – if Mr. W.B. Yeats, the Irish poet, finds so much akin to the genius of the Irish race and its early literary expression in the works of the poet of Bengal, for in Ireland – Erin or Iran – lingered the last survivals of the Celtic Aryans, and to the early to decipher the primeval records of Sanscrit and race wanderings.

"We call this the epoch of Rabindranath", said an eminent Bengali doctor to Mr. Yeats. "No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the west of India into Burmah, wherever Bengali is spoken. He was already famous at nineteen, when he wrote his first novel, and plays written when he was a little older are still played in Calcutta. He first wrote much of nature; he would sit all day in his garden. From twenty-five to his thirty-fifth year he wrote the most beautiful love poetry. After that his art grew deeper, and it became religious and philosophical". The words of

the Bengali doctor are those of a disciple reverencing his master – a poet and saint.

For generations great men have come out of the Tagore family. Rabindranath has received the honour of Knighthood, a high tribute in these days to a poet of Eastern lineage.

Extracts of the poet's work published in this country would not convey much of the charm. The books referred to, of course, are translations and the great part of their intrinsic beauty and rhythm and music is lost. The poet has himself translated many of them, and he has the art of making himself intelligible in pure English. They are poems and verses and wisdom for the mystic of the simple hearts of the humble. In "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings, 4s. 6d. net), we have a handful of songs, mystical and deep, like the strange songs in Novalis' "Pilgrims of Sais".

"Fruit-Gathering" (4s. 6d. net), a sequel to it, contains some of the poet's best work. "Hungry Stones and Other Stories" (5s. net), gives more enjoyable scope to the general reader, and the stories are all pleasant and interesting, even if strange and weird and Eastern. "The King of the Dark Chamber" (4s. 6d. net) is a poetic drama, of which we regret there is no space to speak. "Stray Birds" (4s. 6d) is the latest issue of the poet's work, and is full of the deeper and mystic phrases which mark the rise to higher things. The universality of life is typified in his short flights of song –

"It is the tears of the earth that keep her smiles bloom".

"I cannot choose the best, The best chooses me"

"Life is given to us; we earn it by giving it".

"We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility".

"Wrong cannot afford defeat, but Right can".

"We read the world wrong, and say that it deceives us".

"Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man".

"He who wants to do good knocks at the gate: he who loves finds the gate open".

"Be still, my heart, these great trees are prayers"

"Thus dust of the dead word clings to thee. Wash thy soul with silence"

Such are some of the thoughts of Tagore, a voice from the East, proclaiming the beauty of holiness,

of contemplation, of natural love and brotherhood.  
He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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1 March, 1917

### THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

p106(W)

#### Section: DRAMA

#### "The Cycle of Spring": By Sir R.N. Tagore

A Bengali drama, dedicated by the author "to my boys of Santiniketan who have freed the fountain of youth hidden in the heart of the old poet, and the Dinendranath who is the guide of these boys in their festivals and treasure-house of all my songs "

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9 March, 1917

### THE DAILY GRAPHIC

p11c4(D)

#### Section: IN THE LIBRARY

#### "STRAY BIRDS"

"Stray Birds of summer come to my window to sing and fly away". So stands Tagore's latest volume, "Stray Birds" (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net). It is an admirable key to the book's contents. It contains 326 little vignettes of prose-verse, each stamped with qualities for which the poet is now so well known. Some are suffused with the tender melancholy of the "yellow leaves of autumn". As in previous books from the same pen, the prose has a rhythm which produces the melodious effect of the lyric verse.

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20 March, 1917

### THE DAILY EXPRESS AND IRISH MAIL

p3c7(D)

#### LITERATURE

#### AN ORIENTAL POET

"Stray Birds". By Sir Rabindranath Tagore.  
(Macmillan and Co., London 4s. 6d. net.)

We opened this volume expecting real intellectual pleasure and mental refreshment. We were not disappointed. In these days of stress and conflict, of havoc and upheaval, it is surely good to be carried away for an hour or two from the anxiety and strain of the great present to that calmer atmosphere in which alone the big eternal questions can be faced. Sir Rabindranath Tagore is, we think, the chief poet of the age, and readers of "Gitanyali" and "The Gardener" will appreciate the choice things provided for them in this his latest work. Tagore is a true optimist, a clear thinker, a poet with a vision that lets him look to the "Great Beyond" and not be discouraged. When reviewing "The Gardener" in these columns we commented on the essential difference between Tagore's attitude towards the problem of life and death, and that of Khayyam as portrayed in the Rubaiyat, with its benumbing materialism. We then felt the superiority of the Oriental poet of the twentieth century over the Oriental poet of the eleventh. A perusal of the book before us suggests the same challenging contrast, for it contains some of the finest thoughts Tagore has yet expressed. It is comprised of 326 verses, each a stimulative suggestion clothed in beautiful language. The opening lines are peculiarly fascinating:-

"Stray birds of summer come to my window to  
sing and fly away,  
And yellow leaves of autumn, which have no songs,  
flutter  
And fall there with a sigh"

Presently we are up against his following provocative lines:-

"The mystery of creation is like the darkness of  
night - it is great.

Delusions of knowledge are like the fog of the morning".

Then we get a whole philosophy in these five words:-

"God finds himself by creating".

That Tagore has the command of a very effective satire, the following verses, we think, prove very convincingly:-

"While the glass lamp rebukes the earthen for calling it cousin,

The moon rises, and the glass lamp with a bland smile calls her -

'My dear, dear sister'."

"The canal loves to think that rivers exist solely to supply it with water".

Some of his pictures are exquisitely conceived and executed:-

"I am [he sings] like the road in the night, listening to the footfalls of its memories in silence."

"Night's darkness is a bag that bursts with the gold of the dawn".

And now just one more verse to illustrate his optimism:-

"I have suffered and despaired and known death,  
And I am glad that I am in this great world."

The beauty of the book, which, like all Messrs. Macmillan's publications, is elegantly bound and clearly printed, is much enhanced by the inclusion of a coloured frontispiece by Mr. Willy Pogany, who deserves credit for the excellency of his work.

W.J.P.

24 March, 1917

THE SPECTATOR

p360-361(W)

### "STRAY BIRDS"

(COMMUNICATED)

The world at large loves the concise in literature. There is no group of people, so unlettered that it cannot appreciate wit. The artist in words working on a tiny canvas is sure of popularity if he has talent. Those who refuse to admire Sir Rabindranath Tagore, those who say they feel a sense of mental suffocation in the nebulous sweet atmosphere of his poetry, should read *Stray Birds* (Macmillan & Co., 4s. 6d. net). The book resembles nothing so much as Hebrew Wisdom Literature. It consists of disjointed sayings pregnant with shrewd sense interspersed with short flights of wise rhetoric. Even those readers whom the poetic prose leaves cold must be delighted, we think, with the proverbial philosophy. Here is a typical "stray" saying: "Truth in her dress finds facts too tight. In fiction she moves at ease". The parabolic method could find no more succinct defence. There are many men who would never speak the truth at all if they were to be kept prisoners within the bonds of verbal accuracy. We do not mean that they would lie, but that they would remain silent. They would live within a stronghold of reserve which would be absolutely impregnable. Through the medium of humour or of exaggeration or of fancy they can express their real thoughts and nothing else. To refuse to allow them to express themselves in any but plain and accurate words would be like robbing a musician of his instrument and telling him to write down in the vulgar tongue what he has got to say. He can only reply that he has nothing worth saying at all, if he must say it in black-and-white. It has often occurred to the writer, when reading one of the endless volumes of biography which leave the press nowadays, whether a literary fashion might ever arise for making biography more frankly fictitious. The present principle of selective accuracy is not satisfactory. All that is worth knowing about many men can only be written in fiction. The events of their lives are too uninteresting to repay chronicle, and when reported do but throw their personalities into insignificance - so of-

ten it is a man's portrait, and not his history, which the public would like to see. The great novelists, of course, have undertaken such pictures with occasional success, but too often it is the satirists who have been moved to try their hands at portraiture. Some ridiculous figures would result if such attempts at fancy biographies became common, but anything would be better than the glorified epitaphs lasting over hundreds of pages offered now as a tribute might move at ease unhampered by a trivial schedule of commonplace happenings. In this little book we find another suggestion which we would commend to biographers: "Do not insult your friend by sending him merits from your own pocket."

Like a true Oriental, Tagore has the difference between truth and accuracy ever in his mind. "If you shut your door to all errors truth will be shut out," he says. Does this mean it is better to let the tares grow than risk rooting up the wheat "until the harvest?" The difficulty is to recognize the day of the harvest. "The stream of truth flows through its channels of mistakes," he writes upon another page. He goes even further than this. He says that certain facts do not represent the truth at all; that the heart of man will sometimes give the lie to the provable. "That love can ever lose is a fact that we cannot accept as truth." It sounds absurd to say that in many cases the only proof of truth is its acceptability, yet this may be said of free will, of the musical scale, and a thousand other propositions. But is our author admits the constant inseparability of truth and error, he cannot be said intentionally to confuse them. "The false can never grow into truth by growing in power," he writes. This is a really arresting saying. Who could hold out in his faith that twice two are four if he lived in a community in which no one believed it? The power of error would kill the truth in his mind.

It is a remarkable thing that this latter-day Book of Wisdom does not contain either a cynical or a tragic sentence. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are full of such, so that here our analogy fails. Hope shines through almost every line. "Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discourage of man," should, we think, have formed the first instead of the seventy-seventh aphorism offered to the reader's consideration. Truly it is a "comfortable word," a piece of optimism which no man can deny. The Jewish women who dreamed of

bearing the Messiah had grasped a truth their daughters have forgotten. Why do we not all take heart from it in these leaderless days? All things are made new continually, but we forget it, and, except to men of vision, the world seems very stale. The real optimist lives in a fever of expectation. "That I exist is a perpetual surprise which is life," he is ready to declare. Everything is changing, the worst must pass. "It is the tears of the earth that keep her smiles in bloom." The sense of the flight of time which never leaves the man of sad temperament, threatening him, as it does, with sorrow and death, whispering as it rushes on "The night cometh," does not disturb the man of faith. "Never be afraid of the moments - thus sings the voice of the everlasting." But an optimist who is always merry is an inhuman monster, and every paragraph of this delightful volume is full of humanity. Every wise man is a man of sorrows, but every wise man does not believe sorrow to be irrevocable, although he knows it to be inevitable and inexplicable. "I hear some rustle of things behind my sadness of heart, - I cannot see them," writes the sage, giving voice to the dumb experience of how many men and women to-day? Who would have suspected the Indian dreamer of such simple directness? It seems so impossible that the sophisticated should become simple. Yet they do upon great occasions, casting their unctions from them. The purveyors of intellectual emollients have no trade to-day. How full of "understanding" are the following words: "It is little things that I leave behind for my loved ones, - great things are for everyone." It is strange how little consolation can ever be deduced from any thesis which requires attention. We give our minds, as the saying is, to study when we are unhappy in order to get away from ourselves, just as we go into company. "Man goes into the noisy crowd to drown his own clamour of silence," and in the same way he forces his mind to follow the mental exercises of other minds. Nothing which it takes long to say or thought to unravel can touch real distress. Our philosopher's view of life is summed up in a few words - they stand near the end of the book: "The cry of the wind is like the cry of a wounded world. But I know I am travelling to meet my Friend."

"Let your music, like a sword, pierce the noise of the market to its heart." We are sure many

readers will apply Sir Rabindranath Tagore's words to himself. He has written this time for the many, for busy people with no appetite for the dreams which ravish the intellectual few. He has come into the everyday world to speak to ordinary people. He cannot, we think, fail of a hearing, and a new reputation, more or less valuable than the one he has, according as we choose to look at it. Meanwhile those who listen with delight to this modern Oriental in his - to our minds - wholly foreign mood need not be disappointed. His old vein worked out. There is a new book for them also. It is called *The Cycle of Spring* (Macmillan and Co., 3s. 6d. net). For himself, the present writer must admit that he cannot attach any definite meaning to the poem as a whole. A chorus of "young things" sing about the spring, and laugh at the poets and pundits who seem to desire to put some method into their madness. They do seem to be mad, and it is difficult not to doubt the sincerity of an English reader who says he knows what it is all about. If, however, we regard the songs as translations - and we suppose that every Eastern must translate his thought for the West - we do catch here and there a phrase or an echo which suggests to us that in the original great beauty may have been discoverable. We quote a song - "The Song of Returning Youth":

"Again and again we say 'Good-bye',  
To come back again and again.

Oh, who are you?

I am the flower vakul.

And who are you?

I am the flower parul.

And who are these?

We are mango blossoms landed on the shore of light.

We laugh and take leave when the time beckons us.

We rush into the arms of the ever-returning.

But who are you?

I am the flower shimul.

And who are you?

I am the kamini branch,

And who are these ?

We are the jostling crowd of new leaves".

Surely one "Stray Bird" is worth an "unconscionable deal" of this!

31 March, 1917

**THE INQUIRER**

p151-152(W)

### Section: BOOKS AND REVIEWS

#### CHIPS FROM A POET'S WORKSHOP

**STRAY BIRDS.** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore.  
London: Macmillan & Co. 4s. 6d. net.

FAST in the wake of "Fruit-gathering", which we noticed recently with much delight, there comes another volume from the same pen; but it has upon it none of the marks of hurried work. Like its predecessor it is a rich and a seasonable gift, and it is all the more welcome because it is different at least in its literary form from anything which Sir Rabindranath Tagore has given us hitherto. He calls it "Stray Birds", and many of these short sentences, with their rhythmical cadence are best described as "short swallow-flights of song." Others are crisp aphorisms containing some jewelled thought or a shrewd reflection upon human contact and the meaning of life. Here is the stuff of which poetry and proverbial wisdom are made, only the wisdom has in it no trace of pungency or satire. It is a confession of experience rather than a criticism of the follies and delusions of other men. But a book like this gives few openings to the commentator, and we turn instinctively to the method of quotation. A few sentences culled almost at random will be the best enticement to our readers to embark on a voyage of discovery for themselves. Here, for instance is a group of sayings, which reveal the keen observer of human life who at the same time never forgets the poet's vision:

"The mystery of creation is like the darkness of night - it is great. Delusions of knowledge are like the fog of the morning."

"Rest belongs to the work as the eyelids to the eyes."

"The mind, sharp but not broad, sticks at every point but does not move."

"Your idol is shattered in the dust to prove that God's dust is greater than your idol."

"We read the world wrong and say that it deceives us."

"He who is too busy doing good finds no time to be good."

"Power takes as ingratitude the writings of its victims "

"When his weapons win he is defeated himself."

"Wrong cannot afford defeat, but Right can."

From these we may turn to some of the brief glimpses into the world of divine life and dower, where love and beauty go hand in hand:-

"His own mornings are new surprises to God."

"God finds himself by creating."

"The Perfect decks itself in beauty for the love of the imperfect."

"God grows weary of great kingdoms but never of little flowers."

"God is ashamed when the prosperous boast of His special favour."

"I have scaled the peak and found no shelter in fame's bleak and barren height Lead me, my Guide, before the light fades, into the valley of quiet where life's harvest mellows into golden wisdom."

These are only fragments, and they can only give a faint idea of the wealth of beauty and wise reflection which gladdens the reader on every page. Some of the sayings have a whimsical touch, for example, "Toes are the fingers that have forgotten their past." Others are brimful of imagination, as when the hills are compared to the "shouts of children, who raise their arms trying to catch the stars." There are also many signs that the author, while moving among the unchanging things of human life, has not been unmindful of the special needs of the moment. Had he some soldier of freedom in mind when he wrote "When I stand before thee at the day's end thou shalt see my scars and know that I had my wounds and also my healing"? Or again is it accidental that the last page of his book contains this confession, "I have suffered and despaired and known death, and I am glad that I am in this great world"? —

14 April, 1917

**THE QUEEN, THE LADY'S NEWSPAPER**  
p468(W)

**Stray Birds. By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.)**

Not as impressive as the Gitanjali, these little sayings have a beauty and reality of their own. On our Western minds strike most deeply perhaps those that speak of death encompassing, enwrapping, life, the deepening sense of a beloved presence when the lamp is blown is not less, only the unknown is infinitely more, to the mystic. "I came to your shore as stranger, I lived in your house as guest, I leave your door as a friend, my earth". "God comes to me in the dusk of my evening with the flowers from my past kept fresh in his basket".

16 April, 1917

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**  
p3c2(D)

## NEW BOOKS

### "THE CYCLE OF SPRING"

**THE CYCLE OF SPRING. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp. 134. 3s. 6d. net.**

That maturity cannot understand youth is a belief constantly refuted in the history of poetry and of poets. Or if the charge has any pretext in their case, it is in the sense that they feel and render the childlike spirit in children with an acuteness and delicacy of sympathy which divines the traits of "Nature's Priest" still invested with the glory of dawn, but obscures those which mark only the crude and blundering beginnings of manhood. Swinburne, who created the greatest treasure of child-poetry to be found probably in literature, declared in one of his newly published letters that "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" was for him the most divine of texts; but he laughingly added, in reference to little relative who was keeping the echoes of *The Pines* awake with peals of laughter, that the child's

paradise was, all the same, a noisy place, not adapted to the quieter type of saint.

There is a little trace in Sir Rabindranath's lyric drama of the philosophic ideas to which Wordsworth was led by his contemplation less of childhood than of the mysterious passing away of "the visionary gleam" which in his own childhood had been so intense. Nonetheless it is, as the great "ode", with its discovery of "compensations", is not, a gaily defiant song of youth, a challenge to all the pedantries and sleek complacencies of traditional and routine wisdom. It is dedicated to the boys of his Bolpur school, "Who have freed the fountain of youth hidden in the heart of the old poet"; and the coming on of spring - the intoxicating splendour and luxuriance of spring in India - supplies both the motive of the action and the inspiration of an inexhaustible wealth of song and lyric dialogue. But the theme is conveyed with delightful versatility of dramatic resource; wit and humour, sarcasm and irony, all good-natured but carrying their point unmistakably home, are called in by the spirit of poetry in its own defence.

The prelude is an amusing picture of an Indian king's Court. The King's Vizier attempts to call his attention to pressing affairs - a frontier war and the cries of his starving people at home. But he has received a summons, as he supposes, from "the last great frontier of all", and is too busy to attend to any "business" but that of his soul. The Court Pundit is called in, who reads salutary couplets from the book of Renunciation. The King receives them with high-flown eulogy, and bids the Vizier give him a hundred gold pieces, a perishable gift, to which the astute Pundit intimates that he would prefer the "permanent" treasure of a province and a good house. Then comes the Poet, who tells him to pursue not the "Permanent" - the spirit of tradition and routine - but life, which is ever renewed through death and change, and a "renunciation" which is only the emancipation from low desires which comes through ardent self-projection into the very spirit of life itself. The King receives this opposite doctrine with precisely the same exalted satisfaction, and calls on the Vizier to reward it as before. But to his astonishment the Poet wants neither the gold pieces nor any substitute, but proposes to perform before him the lyric apology for youth and spring and life to which this scene serves as prelude.

Not that the poets have it all their own way. On the contrary, among the representatives of unromantic "philistinism" is another poet, Dada, who boasts that "he has never written a line not inspired by an actual fact," and is in the way of "explaining" his quatrains with an impressive "that is to say", in effect restoring them to their original prose. There is a joyous scene where the boys, who stand now for spring buds and leaves, now for eager creative play against dull routine work, now for poetry against prose, confront Dada, and after hearing his quatrain cut short his "that is to say" with a mocking lyric of their own, protesting that real poetry is its own language and cannot be put in any other, the whole little drama is a spring-gift such as England has seldom received. As usual, Sir Rabindranath seems to have been fortunate in his translators. And some part of this work is his own.

C.H.H.

18 April, 1917

LIVERPOOL DAILY POST AND MERCURY  
p8c2(D)

## THE IDEALIST

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S SCHOOL

**Shantiniketan. By W. W. Pearson. London: Macmillan and Co. 4s. 6d. net.**

Rabindranath Tagore's fame as a poet has attracted wide attention to his school at Bolpur, and no one who reads this book will refrain from the wish to visit the remarkable school situated about a hundred miles from Calcutta.

In a preface the poet outlines the causes which lead to the foundation of this school for the education on ideal lines of Indian boys. Tagore felt that modern civilisation was leading life away from the realities, which in his case mean the ideals, and he seemed to hear the Vedic tongue speaking from the ashrams or forest sanctuaries of the past. He determined, therefore, to found his school on the simplest basis in the very heart of nature. "I was certain that the ancient teachers of India were right when they said with a positive assurance: 'It is an

absolute death to depart from this life without realising the eternal truth of life.' "

"Shantiniketan" means "House of Peace," and the school is composed of a number of very simple, low-built buildings. The classrooms are in the open, and the compound all day is dotted with little figures squatting in coloured shwals. Each evening there is a service in the temple, wherein, following the instruction of Tagore's father, a saint and a mystic, there is no image and no altar - "the one invisible God is to be worshipped." A feature of the school is the singing. The boys are encouraged to sing on all occasions. Everywhere there are memories of the poet, and the boys often pointed out to Mr. Pearson the shady paths where he walked. At night in the stillness rose the sound of the boys' voices singing, before they retired to bed, one of the poet's songs. They rise with song in the early morn. and so to rest with song filling the rich darkness.

Everything is done to develop the individuality of the boy. He is allowed liberties that would shock the English schoolmaster. He can interrupt a lesson to ask questions about a bird flitting around; he may do his examination paper while sitting in the fork of a tree.

In the evening, as it was a moonlight night, we went out, boys and teachers as well, to a wood about a mile away from the school. We sat in a circle under the trees and the boys sang. One of the teachers told a story, and I told them of my meeting with the poet in London. Then we walked back across the open country, which laid still and quite under the spell of the Indian moonlight.

The discipline of the school is carried on by courts formulated by the boys, on the principle that the faulty self-government is better than good government. The work done in this school is only lightly touched upon by the author. There is mention of the boys going on to the University, and we are led to wonder whether the curriculum is that of the ordinary public school. Mr. Pearson mentions that the boys only lose their freshness when the shadow of matriculation is thrown upon them, that the small boys are allowed to enjoy life to the full, but we know that matriculation is a matter of long preparation from infancy, and it would be interesting to learn at what period and with what effort the boys

are prepared for university life. No one denies the value of bringing the poetry of nature into the boy's life, but at present all attempts in that direction must be subordinated to the central purpose of examination-room efficiency.

The daily routine is certainly vigorous. The boys are awakened, not by a bell, but by singing, at sunrise, of a band of boys. They take their bath in wells in the grounds, after which they have fifteen minutes for silent worship. Then they gather together and chant verses selected from Upanishads. After light food, classes begin at 7 a.m., with work until 11.30, then a short break and individual work in rooms during the heat of noon. Classes begin again at 2, and continue until 5. In the evening the boys play football, go walks, tell stories, or act plays. Such is day's work. The boys are of all castes, and they exercise their own discretion on observation of caste distinctions. The boys serve at meals by turn and do light work in the kitchen. The fees are less than £20 a year, but a large deficit is made up annually by the poet.

We strongly commend this book, so full of the poetry of young life. It is a simple story simply told, and reveals to us once more that the elemental East has much to teach the complex West.

20 April, 1917

**EVERYMAN**

p37(W)

## Section: LITERARY NOTES

### An Indian school

About a hundred miles from Calcutta Sir Rabindranath Tagore has continued his father's school. If we want to realise the distance between east and West we must read *Shantiniketan* (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net), and at the same time keep Rugby in view. We are told that Christianity will never reach its ideal until it has absorbed what of truth the East is ready to give. Surely this must also be true of Education. The freedom, opportunity for self-development, and originality at Shantiniketan are far beyond what can be found in the average school in England, though not beyond what Mr. Arrowsmith, Madame Montessori, the Caldecott Community and Mr.

Homer Lane are struggling to come at. Meanwhile Tagore has established his school, and we Westerners, especially those who have "new Ideals", should certainly read, mark and learn what Mr. W.W. Pearson has written so simply and so poetically.

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30 April, 1917

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p6c1(D)

### A MASQUE OF SPRING

"The Cycle of Spring", by Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan: 3s. 6d. net), is a work to which the old term "Masque" would apply more accurately than any other. It is a piece of joyous symbolism in dramatic form, and the idea it expresses is that of the recurring eternal rejuvenation of nature and humanity. A band of merry youths go forth to hunt out and chase away the old man winter; just when their mission seems to be failing, and they are subsiding into the staleness and convention of age, the old man, their enemy, is suddenly revealed to them as the spirit of spring, everlastingly young, the vital principle of their own lives. The main thought is worked out in poetic detail with a gaiety, a freshness of fantasy, and a brilliance of contrast that carry the reader easily over passages that might, if less fascinatingly expressed, seem difficult of interpretation. The prelude to the masque proper has some rare touches of irony, and is more Oriental in its colouring than the masque itself, the style of which has a curious kinship with that of Mr. Yeats. The great Indian poet has written nothing less distinctively Indian, but nothing more essentially poetic.

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9 May, 1917

**THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH**

p392(W)

### Stray Birds

"Stray Birds." By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan. 4s. 6d.)

Less picturesquely, this volume might be termed "gleanings from a Poet's Notebook" - if poets have

such mundane things as note-books. The volume consists of 326 brief sayings - often no more than a single sentence. Some are commonplace enough; but the majority are Tagore at his best.

"The Waterfall sings, 'I find my song when I find my freedom.'" "Rest belongs to the work as eyelids to the eyes." "If you shut your doors to all errors, truth will be shut out." "We live in this world when we love it." "I have suffered and despaired and known death, and I am glad that I am in this great world."

These are living words - and words of life.

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12 May, 1917

**THE SPECTATOR**

p544-545(W)

### Section: SOME BOOKS OF THE WEEK

*Shantiniketan: the Bolpur School of Sir Rabindranath Tagore.* By W.W. Pearson (Macmillan and Co. 4s. 6d. net.) - At Bolpur, a hundred miles from Calcutta, Sir Rabindranath Tagore has a boy's school called Shantiniketan, or "The House of Peace". The fundamental idea of the school is to let the boys "develop their own characters in the way which is natural to them". They play football, they go for picnics, they have their lessons in the open air. In the morning and evening they sing the founder's songs and have silent worship. They take turns at serving the meals. Discipline is maintained by the boys in their own courts. The blending of the traditional Hindu and the modern English methods of education seems to be successful, thanks to the personal loyalty of pupils and staff to the founder. Mr. Pearson's account of this interesting school is well worth reading. In the preface the poet explains how he came to establish it, with the help of Mr. Satish Chandra Roy, a poet who died at the age of twenty but left behind him happy memories and a pleasant little Hindu legend which Mr. Pearson has translated in this book.

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19 May, 1917

**THE DAILY CHRONICLE**

p2c6(D)

**Section: BOOKS OF THE DAY**

***An Eastern Prophate***

"Sweetness and Light" are the familiar words in which one might, quite rightly interpret a new Tagore book, "Personality" (Macmillan). It consists of the lectures he recently delivered in America, and their message is eloquent of the East to the West. Tagore speaks for all that is noblest in the modern thought of the East, and the West will, in these pages, hear him gladly once more.

31 May, 1917

**THE NEW WITNESS**

p115-116 W.

**REVIEWS**

**SIR RABINDRANATH TUPPER**

I am, unfortunately, not acquainted with many of the sixty volumes which have come from the pen of our industrious babu, and while other works of his ("Gitajali" or "The Gardener", for instance) would better serve to my point good, there are enough eggs in two volumes before me for the mixing of my pudding. I do not know whether it has been pointed out before, but in Sir Rabindranath we have Tupper nedivivus. Probably others have noticed it - now could so obvious a fact escape attention for long? - but fearing popular opinion and the terrible aegis of the Nobel Prize held their peace.

Some have said, What is in a name? - most patent plastic influence,

A name is a word of character, and reputation establisheth the fact

How true that is! Reputation has clearly established the fact that this elderly Bengali schoolmaster is a wonderful and original poet of mysticism and of love.

Now "Stray Birds" is on the face of it nothing less and nothing more - than proverbial philosophy. The form here is apparently different from that effected in Martin Farquhar Tupper's famous book; yet only apparently so. In the one case proverbial philosophy is handed out in enormous slabs, in the other doled out in tiny aphorisms. But knock away the numbers 1 to 326 which separate morsel from morsel, weld the atoms together into a solid mass (and no great violence is necessary to the process) and Tupper will be beaming upon you not only in spirit but in the flesh, not only in tone but in form.

At the outset I must admit that I first need "Stray Birds" without cutting the leaves of the volumes; for as Rabindranath might have said, "The Bird that I hold in my hand is worth 326 Stray Birds in the book." But after I had captured such beauties as number 156: "The Great walks with the Small without fear. The Middling keeps aloof," and "Toes are fingers that have forgotten their past," my zest for capture was quickened and I straightaway spread the nets of the fowler in the hope of sharing "To the lamb that had been shorn even the wind is tempered at the hands of the God," or "Said Sloth! I will put off until tomorrow the work of today. Said Industry! To-day procrastination shall come to thee as a thief." Although these escaped upon their bright wings yet I was not altogether unrewarded. Stray Birds 298 and 299 were entangled for my delight - behold the fine feathers which make the fine birds! "My heart has spread its sails to the idle winds for the shadowy island of Anywhere." "Men are cruel, but man is kind."

The "Cycle of Spring" is a play, and from its occasional lyrics I must compare the two Tupperes. How many could say from which these lines are taken?

Thoughts that have tarried in my mind, and peopled its inner chambers.

The sober children of reason, or desultory train of Fancy...

The fruits I have gathered of prudence, the ripened harvest of my musics.

These commend I wrote thee, O dolice scholar of wisdom,

These I give to thy gentle heart, thou lover of the night.

If you were not told that this was written by  
tweedle dum:

Thou has seen many sorrows, travel-strained  
pilgrim of the world:

and the following Tweedledee, would you be  
able, O Reader, to swear to the authorship?

Wealth stands before me offering its crown  
The tempest of youth sweeps the sky - harp with  
its fingers;  
My heart dances with its wild rhythm  
Gathering and storing are not for me, I spend  
and scatter,

And prudence and comfort bid me adieu in  
despair.

Well, I think that perhaps you might be able to  
tell, but only because of one small and accidental  
clue. Tweedledum would by no means endorse the  
wild prodigality of Tweedledee. Has he not written  
himself with sober sense of Marriage:

And look not only for riches, lest thou be mated  
with misery;

Marry not without means; for so shouldest thou  
tempt Providence;

But wait not for more than enough, for marriage  
is the duty of most men?

Of Sir Rabindranath's play the prelude is inter-  
esting in its way, the play itself being incoherent  
and confused with lyrics. Even at its best, he will  
use English colloquialisms in an uncolloquial way  
- the mark that invariably distinguishes the babu.  
Just such as one was the native government official  
in India who wrote to his superior excusing his  
absence from the office on the ground that his wife  
had "kicked the bucket".

In the play the urchins spoil what little good  
there is to spoil, with their irritating habit of burst-  
ing into song every other minute. Did you ever try  
to write a Tagore lyric, my friend? It is quite easy,  
I assure you. Come, let us begin:

I sat in the darkness with my beloved,  
And darkness was full of a million stars and the  
soft flower of her breast;

And her lips were more to me than the chatties  
of Benares,

More than the blossoms upon the banyan trees  
that no mortal eye hath beheld.

The south wind stirred lightly among the many  
leaves,

And love was soft like the vice of a bird,

Like the fizz of a soda-water syphon when you  
press upon the lever,

Love blew in the darkness through our quivering  
hearts.

O my beloved, with whom I sat in the darkness,  
and so on ad infinitum!

Mr. W.W Pearson gives us in "Shantiniketan"  
an account of the Bolpur School of Rabindranath  
Tagore. There, it seems, the boys are awakened  
each morning "before sunrise by the singing of one  
of the poet's songs by a band of singers". Poor  
little devils!

However, the evil fates have begun to overtake  
the man who devised this hideous form of torture.  
I am told that in the Battersea Public Library he is  
indexed as "Baggore", and that his works are asked  
for by young ladies under that name. Begonia, but  
it serves him jolly well right!

**Theodore Maynard.**

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31 May, 1917

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p259(W)

## MAN THE CREATOR

**PERSONALITY. Lectures delivered in America. By  
SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan. 5s.  
net.)**

This book abstains from proof, and therefore there  
is nothing either to endorse or to refute. It paints;  
and we can only enjoy feeling perhaps that an-  
other picture could have been painted on the same  
subject, but not a better one. Personality, if we can  
imagine it made the subject of an actual painting,  
as let us say, motherhood has been, is here handled  
in Botticelli's manner rather than in Murillo's - as,  
primarily, an act of faith rather than as a piece of

truth. For all through the book we are made to feel that nothing we can say about personality has any meaning beyond that which it draws from, or by which it fills out our idea, of a Supreme Person.

The question of individuality - that is, at what point personal influence begins and ends - is touched upon only in the implication of Chapter V, which is about the author's school at Bolpur; and the question of identity, involving multiplex personality and persistence after death, is not broached. The simple and sufficient reason for this is that in the eyes of the author a "person" is a "creator". He creates, in Berkeley's own sense, the world in which he lives, and in that act he creates himself, for "if this world were taken away, our personality would lose all its content." If a person is a creator, the first question we can ask about personality is "What is art?" The "what" is not answered here, but the "why" and the "whence" are propounded, and the answer to these is that art aims at expressing our joy and springs from our "surplus" of knowledge and feeling. "When feeling is aroused in excess of the amount that can be completely absorbed by the object which has produced it, it comes back to us and makes us conscious of ourselves by its return waves." Man "feels his personality more intensely than other creatures because his power of feeling is more than can be exhausted by his object." This goes deeper than Schiller's "play-impulse," which he also derived from "super-fluity of life" and prized as being free from "the over-careful impress of a purpose," because it does not cut life in two between work and play and it does justice to the serious need of self-utterance. Meanwhile the word "joy" clasps with a human warmth that "idea of beauty" which, whether as a cold abstraction or as an objective state or process, has run through much subsequent aesthetic

The world in which creative man - the person - works is one of complete relativity. He recognizes no fact as absolute and laughs at the abstractions of science. The world is as the "person" sees it, and he does not go about in it armed with a telescope or a resonator. Anything may be, for some one perceptive, far or near, in motion or at rest, finite or infinite, and for all perceptive it is both. Some specially gifted persons, like Walt Whitman, can even make dexterous adjustments of their minds, and get

enlargements or miniatures, elevations or plans, as suits their mood. Further, the very form which the mind gives to its perceptions is not stable: "When the world takes its shape it always transcends its shape: it carelessly runs out of itself to say that its meaning is more than what it can contain." The "meaning" of all reality is that "the infinite is giving himself out through finitude" and "reality is the expression of personality."

In all that is said here of personality we are constantly reminded of the picture, in the first gospel, of the kingdom of heaven - that supersession of letter by spirit, of law by personality. The annunciation of this kingdom of personality rings like the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

If man could only listen to the voice that rises from the heart of his own creation, he would hear the same message that come from the Indian sage of the ancient time: "Hearken to me, ye children of the Immortal, dwellers of the heavenly worlds, I have known the Supreme Person who comes as light from the dark beyond"

The lore of that kingdom can be given only in parable, its mysteries only to human men, and its keys to the most human of them; and so harsh facts like oppressive laws and arbitrary regulations can only enter into the kingdom of art when "viewed in their application to some human individual, in all their injustice, insult, and pain." Again, certain passions can be taken onto the kingdom, but mere desires of the flesh cannot, for they are "soon exhausted and given no indication of the infinite"; they are like the man with one talent, or "like an immigrant coming to these Atlantic shores who can show no cash balance in his favour." Once more, like the "house-holder" whose son the husbandmen wished to kill that they might seize on his inheritance, "everywhere in man's world the Supreme Person is suffering from the killing of the reality by the imposition of the abstract."

The author's attitude towards science, passing lightly from gentle banter to overt rebuke, administers to us a mild shock. It is curious, too, from a poet who must need, at least, draw upon science for his best metaphors and similes, and, at most, see in science, no less than in art, a handmaid of religion. He says:

Once we accept as truth such a scientific maxim as the "survival of the fittest," it immediately transforms the whole world into a monotonous desert of abstraction, where things become dreadfully simple because robbed of their mystery of life

He is thinking of the "rampant materialism... which sacrifices individuals to the bloodthirsty idols of organization, and that is no doubt the common interpretation of this scientific formula. But may it not equally be a fulfilling of the law of love? For if, as he says farther on, "I am truer in some one else than myself," if suffering leads to "the surrender of self to be tuned for the music of the soul" and this surrender is "the soul's free choice of its life of cooperation with God in the work of the perfect moulding of the world of law into the world of love," if "forms must die to reveal the deathless," and if "to give oneself in love to all" is actually to "be" God, then we in this travail of the whole creation are not prostrating ourselves before any Juggernaut car of evolution, but "waiting for the redemption of our body."

What we seem to miss in this book is the joy of going on. This is absent partly because tentative justice has already been done to it in a chapter on Sadhana. But it is absent also because, at bottom, just an England does not quite understand a life of contemplation, or even a contemplative period of life, so India is not quite in sympathy with a mere life of action. The poised mind of Greece felt both impulses: it weighed in the balance the "theoretic" and the "practice" life, and found neither wanting. The sound heart of Rome felt the "tears of things," but brushed them aside with the "manliness" which for them epitomized virtue. But India places the Brahman above the Kshatriya, and we have only to translate these by priest and warrior to see how difficult it would be for us to accept the estimate. Yet all the time India means by Brahma such a "contemplation" as is in itself "action": and if we with our restless and many-sided activities are trying with all our strength to make some corner of life our very own, it is in order to get, as we think we so alone can get, the clue to the universe. Neither of us is quite allowing for the change of outlook caused by the differentiation of knowledge which facilities of communication make inevitable. Indians are still thinking in mediaeval categories, like

sturdy yeomen who till their own lands, and in that lies the glamour of their scholarship, art, and religion; whereas in England every rood of soil of thought has long undergone intensive cultivation, and there is little room now for any but landlords and labourers, encyclopaedists and specialists. Perhaps both could profit by Kingsley's advice when he said that the boys should be pure and the girls brave. The one might remember that Heaven helps those who help themselves, and the other not forget for the sake of life the causes of living.

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4 June, 1917

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p3c3(D)

**SHANTINIKETAN: THE BOLPUR SCHOOL OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** By W.W. Pearson. London: Macmillan and Co. pp. xv.111. 4s. 6d. net.

From the many admirers in this country of Rabindranath Tagore's poetry and teaching this slender volume should be assured of a welcome. Shantiniketan, the school founded by the poet is at Bolpur, about 100 miles from Calcutta, in the midst of open country. The classes are largely held in the open air, and the day for the boys begins and ends with silent worship in "a silence strangely still and beautiful". There are about 150 boys and 20 teachers, so that the boys get much individual attention and personal intercourse with their masters.

Mr. W. W. Pearson, whose account of the school occupies the first half of the book, is himself one of the masters and a whole-hearted admirer of the spirit of the place. What that spirit is may be gathered from the beautiful little story, "The Gift to the Guru", which follows. It is the work of another of the masters, a Bengali student of great promise who died young, and Mr. Pearson has translated it with sympathy and skill. Four short contributions from the Indian poet's own pen complete the book - the Shantiniketan school song, an introduction, and two addresses. Two sentences from one of these might serve as a motto for the whole: "I believe in an

ideal life" and "Everywhere in this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice". The contrast with the spirit of Europe, striking enough at any time, is greater than ever just now, and the western teacher should find real refreshment of soul in this message from the "House of Peace"

7 June, 1917

**THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT**  
p211-212(W)

**PERSONALITY. By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan: 5s. net.)**

In his new book Sir Rabindranath Tagore has a chapter on his school at Bolpur. Some details of the school life and a sense of the atmosphere which surrounds the inmates and of the thoughts which fill their minds were given earlier in the year by another book, "Shanti-niketan" (Macmillan), written by one of the master, and a sketch of the life there appeared in the *Educational Supplement* for September 21, 1916. But here Tagore tells us the thoughts which filled his own mind when at the age of 40 he founded the school, and those which fill it now after 15 years' experience.

It is these thoughts that are so much more important to us than any specific account of the working arrangements: for, interesting though these are, they are barely intelligible except to one who knows the Indian ways and manner and mind, who can sympathize with their outlook and admire wholeheartedly their great ideals. In these words of the founder of the school, written quite simply without an atom of pretension, we may read that a man "is" what he does, and that the thing he makes has no meaning except as his work.

Tagore started with 10 boys and no experience at an age when most men are well up in their profession. He was led to this work partly by dissatisfaction with his own schooling, partly by questionings that came from his anxiety about the education of his own son. What, he asked himself, is the real object of a school? What could the right sort of school hope to do for India? His own words are best:-

I believe in a spiritual world - not as anything separate from this world, but as its innermost truth... Experience of this has to be gained by children by fully living in it, not through the medium of theological instruction... Religion is not a fractional thing, but the centre of gravity of our life. Children attain it where life is simple, when surrounded by leisure, ample space and fresh air, and where men live with a perfect faith in the eternal life... In ancient India the students lived in their master's home like the children of the house, without having to pay for their board, lodging, or tuition. The teacher prosecuted his own study, living the life of simplicity, and helping the students in their lessons as a part of his life and not of his profession... Books come between us and the world; plasters of book phrases stick to our mental kin, making it impervious to direct touches of truth... I have set all my resources to create an atmosphere of ideas in the school.. It is the boys' own world; they have their place in school administration, and their own Courts of justice

He considered himself fortunate in having the help of a living teacher (for a year only, because he died quite young) who devoted his life to the work, and fortunate, too, in having the suitable place and a constant tradition ready to his hand. But we shall none of us refuse the credit that is due to the mind that could recognize, in man or place, genius when it stood before him. We should not perhaps have expected - there were many in India who did not expect - a poet to make a success of such a "business" matter as a school; but that success is not wholly a matter of business, and is not to be compassed even by a board of education, is precisely the moral of the story.

It was not all plain sailing. The ideals of most Indian schools were different, and the British Government had not altogether reason to trust the school-master. Resources were small, and there was a heavy debt. Tagore after telling us quietly where he was wrong himself, names other sources of difficulty - distrust, which lurks in all of us, of the spirit of man, our own self-importance, the habit of looking for the causes of our failure outside us, the endeavour to over-organize, the propensity to do good by force, a feeble faith in boys' minds as living organ-

isms, the different degrees of receptivity in some and actual delinquency in others. But "those who have firm faith in their ideas have to test its truth in discords and failures."

There is very little here we could copy in detail, and that is what makes the book such a help. It only asks us, as the Greek classics do with political and social problems, to sit down and do our own thinking, and to translate into our more complex circumstances truths the drawing of whose lines has been made possible by an experiment conducted in a simpler material.

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8 June, 1917

**THE WESTERN MORNING NEWS**

p4c1(D)

**Section: NEW OR RECENT BOOKS**

**Personality, Sir Rabindranath Tagore  
(Macmillan, 1917, 5s)**

A generation which boasts the invention of electric light finds contact with the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, a matter of some difficulty. Tagore, as one of the prophets, speaks for this reason in tones which not all would hear, and his message is not text-book for "periods of reconstruction", rather does the seer speak on unfamiliar matters, the value of art, the comparative worthlessness of science, the failure of education, and pleads with his readers for the one eternal fact in man's life, his personality showing that in recognition of this fact alone can man unite himself - as is his birthright - with God, the Supreme Personality. Nor short notice can do justice to the theme or to Tagore's success, but for the sake of truth we must add that here indeed the East may well lead the West.

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12 June, 1917

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p6c3(D)

**"PERSONALITY"**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet and philosopher, has written yet another book. He calls it "Personality" (Macmillan, 5s. net). It is a good title. By example and precept he shows the value of each person doing his own thinking, and trying to be true to his own self. In testing his belief in himself, he did not find it all plain sailing. But the conclusion he came to was that those who have "firm faith in their idea must test its truth in discords and failures." He had many trials when, at the age of 40, he set up in India to give expression to his ideals of what a school should be like. These were his ideals:

I believe in spiritual world - not as anything separate from this world, but as its innermost truth. Experience of this has to be gained by children by fully living in it, not through the medium of theological instruction. Religion is not a fractional thing, but the centre of gravity of our life. Children attain it where life is simple, when surrounded by leisure, ample space and fresh air, and where men live with a perfect faith in the eternal life. In ancient India the students lived in their master's home like the children of the house, without having to pay for their board, lodging, or tuition. The teacher prosecuted his own study, living a life of simplicity, and helping the students in their lessons as a part of his life and not of his profession. Books come between us and the world; plasters of book phrases stick to our mental skin, making it impervious to the direct touches of truth.... I have set all my resources to create an atmosphere of ideas in the school. It is the boys' own world; they have their place in school administration, and their own Courts of justice.

The ideals were high; but they succeeded. If they could not be adopted here, the ideas at the back of them might be adapted with valuable results. In all its phases the book has a stimulating influence. It is composed of a series of lectures given by the author in the great cities of America.

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15 June, 1917

**THE BAPTIST TIMES AND FREEMAN**

p367(W)

**THE IMMANENCE OF GOD**

All who have learnt to value the truth and beauty of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's work will be grateful to him for his most recent book, entitled "Personality." It surveys the whole philosophy of life which underlies his numerous poems and plays, and will send us back to read them again with instructed eyes. Apart, however, from this personal interest, which makes the book a fitting sequel to his father's impressive "Autobiography," and apart from the charm of poetic diction and picturesque illustration of truth, the book is of great value as a product of Indian religion purified by Christian morality. Its distinctive feature is the passionate and eloquent presentation of divine immanence, not as a doctrine of the schools, but as a glowing personal faith. It may, indeed, be India's mission, as the writer claims, "to realise the truth of the human soul in the Supreme Soul through its union with the soul of the world," and to awaken Christianity to the unrealised possibilities of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

"In India, the greater part of our literature is religious, because God with us is not a distant God; He belongs to our homes, as well as to our temples." This omnipresence of God, in nature and human life, is no abstract doctrine, the formality of which becomes a barrier to its own living realisation. "Everywhere in man's world the Supreme Person is suffering from the killing of the human reality by the imposition of the abstract." Is not this remark true of the present attitude of most men to the great Christian doctrines, notably to that of the trinity? In making our definitions, we so often sacrifice the essential detail that makes the life; we lop off the branches and roots of the tree (to use one of the vivid figures of this book), to turn it into a lifeless log, easier to roll about from classroom to classroom. The ultimate reality is in the Person, the Immortal Person unto whom man's passionate cry has gone forth through all generations. Until men find Him, the highest values and the deepest meanings of life are wanting. "If the world remained still and final, then it would be a

prison-house of orphaned facts which had lost their freedom of truth, the truth that is infinite." That happy phrase, "orphaned facts," is well worth remembering, for the light it throws on present problems of evangelism. There is in men's lives so much of moral worth which is robbed of its spiritual nurture and support. The facts of life are as real as they ever were in the days of amplest religious vigour; but, somehow, we teachers of religion have failed to show to the mass of men the spiritual parentage of these "orphaned facts." Is there not here a task to engage the most earnest thought and prayer of all ministers of religion - that we may learn to welcome the work already done by the Spirit of God in the hearts of men, that we may lead them on, from that point, to the fullness of our Christian faith?

Whenever a thinker emphasises the immanence of God, he must be ready for the challenge: "What, then, of the reality of the individual life?" This poet-thinker is naturally more concerned with the living experience of religion than with the reconciliation of its data into a systematic whole. There are sentences which would not, in themselves, take us beyond pantheism, as, for example: "The Great Master plays; the breath is his own, but the instrument is our mind through which he brings out his songs of creation"; but the reality of individual life is clearly implied when it is said: "He gives us from his own fullness and we also give him from our abundance." Of course, the great question for religious thought remains - how is this particular reality of the individual related to the universal life of God? Apparently, the answer of Sir Rabindranath Tagore would be found in the thought of "degrees of reality," each helping to constitute the whole of truth. In a particularly happy illustration of this, he refers to the stars, which appear to be standing still, though science proclaims their ceaseless motion: "Let us boldly declare that both facts are equally true about the stars. Let us say that they are unmoved in the plane of the distance and they are moving in the plane of the near... The distant and the near are the keepers of two different sets of facts, but they both belong to one truth which is their master."

The contribution of the book, however, lies much less in any intellectual handling of man's personal life than in the living appreciation of its values.

Man is a child in the womb, whose unused limbs proclaim his future; man is a chick in the shell, inspired to break its prison walls and so fulfil its destiny. Man makes the world his own by living in it and by knowing it, and so overcoming the dualism in which his life begins. The highest form of this dualism is that of his consciousness of what is and what ought to be. To recognise the supremacy of the "ought to be" is man's second birth, the characteristic feature which distinguishes man from animals. In this moral world which is peculiarly man's own he discovers that progress is by renunciation. "The consciousness of the infinite in us proves itself by our joy in giving ourselves out of our abundance." The process of our renunciation is "like the flowing of the river, which is the river itself." So only do men attain to "that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth, not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love." The most impressive example of this is in an autobiographic passage, worthy to be linked with the story of Devendranath Tagore's response to the call of the river, which led him from the peace of the Himalayas back to the struggle of life in the plains. The son's deep experience, on the other hand, was of God's call from the worry of the business of his school at Bolpur to a self-forgetting and peaceful trust in truth:

I sat alone on the upper terrace of the Shantiniketan house and gazed upon the tree tops of the sal avenue before me. I withdrew my heart from my own schemes and calculations, from my daily struggles, and held it up in silence before the peace and presence that permeated the sky; and gradually my heart was filled. I began to see the world around me through the eyes of my soul. The trees seemed to me like silent hymns rising from the mute heart of the earth, and the shouts and laughter of the boys mingling in the evening sky came before me like trees of living sounds rising up from the depth of human life. I found my message in the sunlight that touched my inner mind and felt a fullness in the sky that spoke to me in the word of our ancient rishi - "Who could ever move and strive and live in this world if the sky were not filled with love?"

**H. WHEELER ROBINSON**

15 June, 1917

**THE DAILY GRAPHIC**

p11c2(D)

#### **Section: IN THE LIBRARY**

#### **"A HOUSE OF PEACE"**

Familiar as are the writing of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, perhaps not many are aware of the existence of his remarkable school at Bolpur. Hence great interest attaches to Mr. W.W. Pearson's account of that institution in "Shantiniketan" (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net.), which includes an introduction by Sir Rabindranath and a delightful story written by one of his pupils. The name of the school means "A House of Peace", and Mr. Pearson testifies that the name is aptly chosen. He gives this account of its origin.

Shantiniketan was founded by the father of the poet, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, as an ashram, or religious retreat, where those in search of peace might have an opportunity for quiet and meditation, and when Rabindranath chose it as the site of his school he knew that the atmosphere of the place was an ideal one for the growth of his own ideals.

Whatever, Mr. Pearson remarks, may be the practical outcome of this unique experiment in education, "which strives to combine the best traditions of the old Hindu system of teaching with the healthiest aspects of modern methods," the ideal aimed at is very lofty. One novel feature of the organisation is the holding of classes in the open air as far as possible.

Each boy brings with him to the various classes his own square piece of carpet for sitting on, and the teacher sits either under a tree or in the verandah of one of the dormitories. This open-air class work has its great advantages, for it keeps the minds of the boys fresh in their aspiration of Nature.

Apart from the interest of the book as a record of a remarkable experiment, it has rare practical value in these days when educational methods are being discussed from every point of view.

23 June, 1917

**WESTERN DAILY PRESS, BRISTOL**

p7c6(D)

**Section: LITERATURE**

**"PERSONALITY"**

This is a collection of six essays recently delivered by Sir Rabindranath Tagore in America. The first four are but very slightly connected with each other, and the last two, entitled "Meditation" and "Woman", are quite distinct. Their style is strangely beautiful and very characteristic of the remote Eastern thought. Many of the dicta reveal exceptional insight and the opening of the second essay, "The World of Personality" is superb. On the other hand the answer to "What is art"? is often unsatisfactory. The author seeks to limit the material of the artist, whereas surely his material is infinite and universal, for "Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder". Tagore tells us, for instance, that for eating no place can be found in Art, yet the story of the Last Supper is perfect. The book is full of delightful reading because it is the work of one who knows that to create is to be free, and that to live in What Is to live in prison. Messers Macmillan and Co. are the publishers

30 June, 1917

**THE QUEEN, THE LADY'S NEWSPAPER**

p768(W)

**Section: THE LIBRARY**

**Shantiniketan. By W.W. Pearson. (Macmillan 4s. 6d. net)**

To ENGLISH people, Sir Rabindranath Tagore's writing needs now no introduction. But for every ten persons familiar with his Gitanjali, hardly one knows of his work at Bolpur. Mr. Pearson describes that Place of Peace exactly as he saw it first, in 1912. About a hundred miles from Calcutta, it is a forest school of 150 boys, combining the essential "inwardness" of ancient Hindu teaching with modern methods, instituted, governed, and largely

supported by, Rabindranath Tagore. The school - Shantiniketan - has all the qualities one would expect from the man who, alone among moderns, unites in his values intense artistic appreciation of Earth's meaning vitality with the highest mystical sense of its transiency. Natural objects - materials of any sort - are to Tagore not more than lacework, water-spray on the Eternal; yet can he write, and say, to his pupils "It is absolute death to depart from this life without realising the Eternal Truth of life".

18 July, 1917

**THE YORKSHIRE POST**

p3c1(D)

**SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE  
ON PERSONALITY**

A reader who jumps too hastily to a conclusion picking up for the first time Sir Rabindranath Tagore's volume on "Personality" (Macmillan and Co., 5s. net) may find himself disappointed. If he expects a profound metaphysical dissertation on the nature of personality he will look for it in vain; for, though the volume is both profound and, in places, metaphysical, it is not with the analysis of personality that the author is concerned. He rather suggests that any attempt to define personality is an attempt to define the indefinable. You may learn a great many things about a rose by pulling a rose to pieces, in doing so, the most essential thing about the rose still eludes you - life. So the great Indian poet, in this volume, which consists of a series of addresses delivered in America, does not attempt to define personality, but rather to describe it, and, by doing so, to reveal some of its implications. His manner of approach to his subject is fresh, and often extremely striking. One or two of his lines of thought may be indicated. A tree, for instance, has life. It draws its nourishment from the air and the soil. That fact is a proof of a oneness between itself and the world in which it finds itself, and at the same time of a duality. It is a tree: it is not the world: and yet, if it were not one with the world, it would not be able to draw life from the world. An animal, again, is part of a world that corresponds with its needs; but it has a wider range of correspondences. When its

elementary needs of food and drink, a mate and companionship, are satisfied, however, it is satisfied. Man is different. He has to satisfy his primitive material wants for food, clothing, shelter, and so on; but, when these are satisfied, he is not. There is a surplus of energy in him over and above that which is necessary to enable him to live. He can revolve the universe about him into isolated parts by a mental process; but, having done so, he is not content until he has reconstructed them in his mind into a unity by discovering unity behind them in the shape of natural laws. He does so by the exercise of reason; and in so doing becomes aware of a Supreme Reason underlying the material appearances of things, and realises that there is a correspondence, a oneness, between that Supreme Reason and his own. But he also realises that he is himself, and by that surplus energy of life which he retains after his brute needs are satisfied he seeks to express himself. He finds on so doing that the world is not only rational, but personal; and that he is happiest when he is most at one with the Supreme Reason who is also the Supreme Person.

Again, in the highly suggestive chapter entitled "What is Art?" with which the book opens, the author shows us that Art is one form of the expression of personality. Art can manifest itself only in that region of surplus energy already referred to. "In other words, where our personality feels its wealth, it breaks out in display. What we devour for ourselves is totally spent. What overflows our need becomes articulate". Man differs from the animal, also, in another respect. In the animal nature there is conflict between what is and what is desired. In man the conflict is between what is desired and what ought to be desired. It is this fight with himself that has given to man's personality the element of character, and character can only be attained through struggle and suffering. But these disciplines of the moral life and their justification in the result; for they develop and love which finds itself one with the Supreme Love. These sentences are but a feeble attempt to indicate the scope of a book which is very wide, and very rich and fertile in its suggestiveness. The book itself enables one to understand why, when the author lectures in California, the hall he speaks in is always crowded to the door.

20 July, 1917

**THE MORNING POST**

p2c2(D)

### A PARABLE OF PEBBLES

**MY REMINISCENCES.** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Illustrated. Macmillan and Co. 7s. 6d. net.

Whence comes and whither goes that gentle, many-coloured brightness of pebbles gathered by children on the sea-shore? It is a beauty which vanished, even for the childish eyes, when the contents of the treasure-pail are examined next morning. This very beauty plays about the simple and direct poems of Rabindranath Tagore (knighting him was as absurd as conferring the O.M. on a beautiful baby-girl would be!), which some critics persist in regarding as the mere shingle of verbiage, having long since lost the faculty of wonderment. Others think that the inexplicable is explained, the rainbow duly dissented, when they have classed him as a "Mystic" with Blake and Walt Whitman and the rest. It is high time, surely, that a less dogmatic method of criticising poetry was adopted. A poem after all is always the work of two men; he who found it in his heart and he whose heart received it. "We are so impressed by the power of poetry," wrote the founder of a new school of criticism fifteen years ago, "that we think of it as something made by a wonderful and unusual person, we do not realise the fact that all the wonder and marvel is in our own brains, that the poet is ourselves. He speaks our language better than we do merely because he is more skilful with it than we are; his skill is part of our skill, his power is our power; generations of English-speaking men and women have made us sensible to these things, and our sensibility comes from the same source that the poet's power of stimulating it comes from". It follows, of course, that what may be one man's poetry is another man's prose or worse. It also follows that what is a poem for you to-day may be prose or worse for you to-morrow. If critics were honest with themselves they would admit the truth of these corollaries as frankly and freely as I do. In certain moods, especially when I have been exploring Virgil or some other casket of the carved gems of language, Blake and Tagore and the rest

leave me cold and incredulous. Yet there are times when the most exquisite Latin or French jewel-work, or the English imitations thereof, seem to me mere mechanic virtuosity – and then Blake or Tagore have for me the effortless wisdom and easy wonderment of flowers and little children and all other silly, simple things that are sufficient to themselves. Yes, there are moments when Tagore and me are the completest poet of all poets that ever happened!

It is the critical custom to speak of Rabindranath Tagore (I refuse “Sir” him!) as a mystical poet. The truth is, as all readers of “My Reminiscences” will learn, he is a poet who has never grown up – who has become more child-like with the sequent years and less intrigued with the conventions of self-conscious living and more in touch with the infantile beauty and lisping wisdom of the world without, which is born again every year and is never so much as a year old. Whenever he was in danger of growing out of childhood the ageless loveliness of the world without came on him like a flood and washed his soul clean of all the taints and tamperings of egotistical Time. Here is his tale of one of these cleansing conversions. “One day, late in the afternoon, I was pacing the terrace of our Jorasanko house. The glow of the sunset combined with the wan twilight in a way which seemed to give the approaching evening a specially wonderful attractiveness for me. Even the walls of the adjoining house seemed to grow beautiful. Is this uplifting of the cover of triviality from the everyday world, I wondered, due to some magic, in the evening light? Never! I could see at once that it was the effect of the evening which had come within me; its shades had obliterated my self”. Thus and then, not for the first or last time, he once more recaptured the selfless mood which enables a child to open and receive the beauty and joy of the world as a flower blossoms and drinks in the rain and the sunshine. “Except ye become as one of these”, ye shall not enter into that Paradise of common things which is everywhere and everywhen for all who can cast off the deadly Western vice of introspection, issuing in pride on the one hand and in self-pity on the other. In its knowledge of this high secret of spiritual health the East is a million years ahead of the West.

I feel sure that this is one of the wisest books

that have ever been written. The author begins by warning us that it is not history; not a record of facts, but a selection of the pictures in remembrance, cunningly composed and passion-tinged, which the unseen, ever-busy painter is always making for all of us – for you and me at this very moment! “Why the ever-busy painter is painting; when he will have done; for what gallery his pictures are destined – who can tell?” Fancy, not fact, is the stuff of which the book is woven; none the less, it is really an invaluable work for all who have anything to do with the bringing-up of children. In the east children are free, it would seem, from the hateful burden of being fussed over by their elders and dressed up and pampered with an excess of toys. On no pretext whatever was this child of a wealthy household allowed to wear socks or shoes till his tenth year was past. He and his brothers each had a pair of slippers – and the habit of kicking them on aligned and catching them up again was natural and boyish. They were spared that superfluity of possessions which so surely kills imagination and initiative in the children of well-to-do Western families. Also their elders were not too readily accessible; so that the little polity of children, by no means a republic, was autonomous in the right degree and surprisingly self-reliant. No Eastern father is ever his son’s pal, as is the ultra-modern custom in this country; even in the most advance families the father-in-the-house reigns by a sort of divine right, a far-descended prerogative. The author’s father, a great traveller, seems to have been the most sagacious of parents. For example, he never indulged in the Eastern equivalent of our Western “pi jaw” – he was content to set a standard of honour and religious ardour and high good breeding, and he would freely and frankly discuss with his son any point deepening mind. Above all, he never scoffed at child-like thoughts and deeds; even when curious, bright pebbles were brought to him (so recurs my first similitude) he asked his son to decorate with them the little hill where he sat for his morning prayer as the sun rose in the far, undulating horizon of a mild and beautiful countryside very like, as travellers ever, to that of Southern England.

Even for educationists, anxious to prepare for After-the-War needs a generation of practical, profitable workers, there is wisdom to be found in the

West under its lofty peaks of speculation white with the snow of eternal thought. In this large, still book the vision emerges continually of an ancient land with solemn rivers and silent groves and flights of steps descending to dark waters and through all the ravishing song of the koel... and also the author's wise intolerance for the cheap noisy political movements of Bengal, with their complete ignorance of the Motherland's true needs and supreme indifference to all true service. And really the author scoffs at the Neo-mysticism which is cultivated in the West - he was annoyed with a curious person who said he had seen God! "He seethed and throbbled before my eyes" (which reminds one of Mr. Bergson's definition of Deity as a continuity of shooting-out).

Here is no recipe for the making of men of action, men of transaction. But the book tells us how to approach the springs of spirituality, which must be the true source of a nation's strength in action and transaction. A child I know, having founding the morning that the pebbles in his treasure-pail had lost all their colour and brightness, took them all back to the beach. "They've only been in the dark a little", he explained. Let us all, as a nation, take our dim, faded jewels down to the shore of the encircling sea that they may drink in the new light and delight.

E.B.O.

21 July, 1917

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p5c1-2(D)

### TAGORE ON PERSONALITY

Plato and Bishop Barkeley wrote a beautiful and lucid prose. But too many metaphysicians weary us with their jargon, and their talk of subject and object, the "I" and the "not-I". (One of them, if one remembers rightly, used the word "bellot" "as in some subtle way distinguished from "being".) Sir Rabindranath doesn't talk like this. What he has to say about personality and its mysteries is contained in a volume entitled "Personality: Lectures delivered in America", published by Messrs. Macmillan.

This is a book that sets one thinking, the kind of book that is not read quickly, because the reader finds himself often putting it down to follow for himself some train of thought which the page before him has started. Such books are fruitful, and good to return to, even when we don't agree with the author. But Sir Rabindranath Tagore is a winning writer; his thought brims over in happy images; and though philosophers may be able to pick holes in his argument, he carries us along with him. He is an artist, not an analyst; and therefore we are interested in his ways of thinking. Even when the matter of it is not new it becomes new because it represents not abstract deductions but the felt convictions of a certain man. The book illustrates its own theme.

The first and perhaps most interesting lecture deals with the question "What is Art?" Why? Because the world which satisfies which completes human personality is the world from which science turns away and in which art takes its place. If we can discover what art is we shall know what the world is; and if we know what that world is we shall know what personality is. That may seem a roundabout way of approaching the question. It is certainly very different from the scientific method of the analysts who try to peel away the coatings of emotional experience to arrive at the kernel of the real man. But Tagore shows a refreshing courage in his attitude to science. Here in Europe we have all been browbeaten by science, whose immense intimidated everybody till a few bold spirits like Bernard Shaw stood up and defied her authority in the region outside her own domain. Who has not witnessed piteous efforts by pious people to make the world of science square with the world of religion? But these are two different worlds, as Tagore clearly sees. So, too, with art. "We can see the world of science by the help of our intellect, but we cannot realise it by the help of our personality." The world which is real, with which we deal with all our emotions, and whose mystery is endless because we cannot analyse or measure it is the world that art is concerned with. It is the region where we have come beyond the needs of the body and the needs of the mind, yet where something still asks for satisfaction. "Man has a fund of emotional energy which is not at all occupied with his

self-preservation. This surplus seeks its outlet in the creation of art". And here Tagore has a very suggestive passage on the theme that "man's civilisation is built upon his surplus". Knowledge is necessary for man in order that he may win his livelihood from nature. But his true life is found when he breaks free from those conditions and proudly asserts that knowledge is for the sake of knowledge. Goodness also is necessary for him as a social being, or his race would itself. But he goes far beyond the mere sufficiency of goodness. He asserts that goodness is for the sake of goodness. "And upon the wealth of goodness - where honesty is not valued for being the best policy, but because it can afford to go against all policies - man's ethics are founded." So, too, art is for the sake of art. Well, we have heard much of art for art's sake; and, as Tagore says, the doctrine has been rather discredited of late. He believes this is due to a recrudescence of asceticism, to the Puritan mistrust of joy. But I hardly think that he is right. It is the way of dogmas, as soon as they are formulated, to become cold and freeze. They lose relation with life, and in the end their truth becomes as if it were no longer true. Art is for the sake of art, no doubt, in the sense Tagore intends. But we have seen that the doctrine used to mean that art is for the sake of the artistic, who alone understand it and that common men are to be warned away from it. Art was to be cut out of life and put in a hothouse. It all depends on how we understand these things. But Tagore makes his meaning plain, so we need not quarrel with his use of a phrase that happens to have been soiled with use. Again, in Tagore's interpretation of "personality" we may agree that art is an expression of personality: but how that phrase has been perverted for the use of students! Keats said a poet has no personality, because he identifies himself with everything he contemplates; and indeed it is the subconscious part of us which is the most personal and which expresses itself in art.

But let us leave these questions of words, which any fool can misinterpret, and follow Tagore into "the world of personality". The point on which he insists is that science has no dealings with this world. "When you deprive truth of its appearance it loses the best part of its reality. For appearance is a personal relationship; it is for me". But "my world is mine... yet it is not wholly unlike your world. Therefore it is not in my own individuality that

this reality is contained, but in an infinite personality". Science, however, dissolves the reality of the world into abstraction, and then it loses touch and taste. "The world-drama with its language of beauty is hushed, the music is silent". "A flower is nothing when we analyse it, but it is positively a flower when we enjoy it. This joy is real because it is personal. And perfect truth is only known by our personality".

I have probably quoted enough to give an idea of the main drift of Sir Rabindranath's argument, which he enriches and enforces with many happy and some rather quaint illustrations. He constantly quotes from Indian sages, and sometimes also from Walt Whitman. In his third lecture he considers his subject more nearly, and deals with the question of man's innate dualism and his conflict with the laws of the natural world. For all other creatures nature is final. But "the travail of birth is upon all humanity". His second birth is into the world of what ought to be, in which his true life subsists. And here comes in, according to Tagore, the true function of science. "She has a materialistic appearance, because she is engaged in breaking the prison of matter... At the invasion of a new country plunder is the order of the day. But when that country is conquered things become different, and those who robbed act as policemen to restore peace and security". Science is invading the material world in order to give man the mastery over it. But the conquest of the material world will in the end set his real soul free. Meanwhile there is furious plundering, and the time of transition appears terribly materialistic. Tagore's argument here is on parallel lines with Oscar Wilde's essay on Socialism and the soul of man. And the rest of the lecture is concerned with the problem of suffering and the relation of man to the infinite personality, to God. "God has to rely on human souls for the fulfilment of his love". Tagore quotes this Indian saying, which is the marrow of his meaning in some eloquent pages. Suffering is "the baby's cry, which would be dumb if it had no faith in its mother".

The next two lectures are an account of the author's Indian school, which, as may be believed was not on conventional lines, and an account of the Indian methods of and uses of meditation. The final lecture is on woman, and gives a key to the intention of the whole book. Tagore regards the present stage of history as transitional. The

masculine element, the principle of power, is supreme, and we are building our civilisation with stone blocks, which end by toppling over. But the feminine principle is that of growth, and woman's function is the passive function of the soil, which not only helps the tree to grow, but keeps its growth within limits. The true world of woman is the world of human relationships. And woman in time will regain her own.

Whatever professed philosophers may think of Sir Rabindranath's doctrine – and no doubt they will find it easy to put him into one of their pigeon-holes, – this little book has the great merit of setting us to think for ourselves; it communicates faith; and it has things to say to us which at the present moment it behoves us well to ponder. "A.E." has warned us in one of his essays that we may beat the Germans materially, but that there will be the danger that in the world of ideas they may prevail through our adopting their aims. I do not think the danger is very great. But certainly we hear much admiring talk of organisation and efficiency, and it is well that we should listen to a warning voice like that of Tagore, which insists on the human values in life, and reminds us that "organisation", the ideal of an age of science, may become a horrible idol, and that we must look beyond it, and hold fast to the truth that the real function of organisation is to liberate the human soul. There are, by the way, one or two interesting criticisms on our Indian Government in these pages. Tagore has elsewhere said that he likes and admires English people, but dislikes our government in India because it is an abstraction. And he has here some incisive remarks on the New Delhi. Only, it seems to me, he does not quite appreciate what nationality means to us in the West. He talks of "nationalism" as a baneful compound of economics and politics. But England is to us a real personality in his own sense, and there is no reason why the personalities of nations should be engaged solely in fighting and exploitation. It may be, however, that I misinterpret his meaning. The volume is "adorned" with a number of photographs of the author, taken in America. I think his admirers will wish them away, for they detract a little from its dignity.

**LAURENCE BINYON.**

22 July, 1917

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

p4c4(S)

### **SIR R. TAGORE'S REMINISCENCES**

"Life's memories", says Sir Rabindranath Tagore in his fanciful way, "are not life's history, but the original work of an unseen artists"; and this is how he explains the pictorial, cinematographic aspect of the book he entitles "My Reminiscences" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net). But though far from offering anything like a strict autobiography, though steeped in personal emotion, these "memory pictures" have an atmosphere of very definite reality about them, in that respect at least resembling the youthful recollections of William Butler Yeats. They throw a strong light on the domestic life of Bengal, on the patriarchal rule of the father family, on the seclusion of zenana, on the sort of education an Indian boy got in the days of the poet's youth, and on the small difference that lack or possession of wealth made in the dispensing of hospitality. He talks, this dreamer, of having been under the rule of servants as a child, or having suffered repression, but his father, of whom, like his brother poet, he gives a wonderfully telling portrait, was wise beyond the wisdom of most parents.

To the end of his life he never stood in the way of my independence. Many a time have I said or done things repugnant alike to his taste and his judgment; with a word he could have stopped me, but he preferred to wait till the prompting to refrain came from within.

This father never checked an enthusiasm of his son, permitted him to go to England, allowed him to write and brood at his own sweet will, and to publish early. "There is no better way", remarks Sir Rabindranath, "of ensuring repentance at maturity than to rush into print too early". He admits the vagueness of some of his most youthful writings, confesses that through most of his life he had practically no commerce with the outside world, but protests that to rule out all poetry which has not attained definiteness would not make literature more true. He does not deny that he has had phases of eccentricity, as when he used to visit fashionable

bookshops clothed in a coarse sheet and a pair of slippers. But these adventures were holiday spree, resulting in the discovery that the schoolmaster life, with his cane, was a myth.

Meantime he firmly believes that he has undergone an experience of illumination, encouraged by a deliberate suppression of self and an endeavour to view the world as a mere spectator.

All of a sudden a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes, and I found the world loathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side.

That experience, sometimes withdrawn from him, has tended to become a permanent part of his relation to life.

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25 July, 1917

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p6c5(D)

### **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S REMINISCENCES**

There are reminiscences which are reflections of the writer's own personality, and others that chiefly consist of studies and anecdotes of other personalities. Those who know the work of the famous Indian poet, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, can guess to which order his "Reminiscences" (Macmillan: 7s. 6d. net) inevitably belong. The book is definitely autobiographical - a series of recalled impressions, recorded by the poet himself of his career. It is not formally autobiographical. its whole principle, indeed, is informal. "Life's memories", he says in the opening chapter, "are not life's history, but the original work of an unseen artist". "There is no event in my reminiscences". he adds, "worthy of being preserved for all the time. But the quality of the subject is not the only justification for a record. What one has truly felt, if only it can be made sensible to others, is always of importance to one's fellow-men".

The poet faithfully carries out his aim of presenting a sequence of memory pictures rather than a narrative. Take, for example, the visit to the Himalayas during boyhood. The mountains and the snow, the forests, the Gorges appear in distant and vague

outline; the detailed picture is of a halt among trees, with a little waterfall trickling in the shade. It is, in fact, this sort of lesser episode that the memory does retain most clearly, and the poet does not go beyond his memory.

Some readers will regard as the chief treasures of the book the little gems of insight with which it is adorned. But there is a lively charm, and much more than charm, in the placid record of Indian high caste family life, written by one who is both of India and of the world. One is alternatively struck with the great differences from the life we know, and with the still greater resemblances. It is a book that helps comprehension. The poet's father, for example, is utterly unlike Hindu of popular imaginings, akin to the graver type of English parent; and yet he could not be other than a Hindu. One rises from the book with broader and more sympathetic views of Indian civilization. The book was not written to inculcate any such views; one gathers that this was not written for English people at all. But as a reflection of a high and ancient culture, not less than as a new revelation of a man of world-acknowledged genius, it is a book that all English people who know or wish to know the work of Sir Rabindranath Tagore will do well to read.

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26 July, 1917

**THE INQUIRER**

p327(W)

### **AN EASTERN THINKER ON EDUCATION**

In the volume of lectures delivered in America, reproduced with the title 'Personality', Sir Rabindranath Tagore presents us with his views on What is Art? the World of Personality, the Second Birth, Meditation, Woman, and offers a striking essay on 'My School.' He confesses that his school was the product of "daring inexperience," and was started at Bolpur in Bengal, when he was nearly 40 years of age. Tagore is not himself a school-teacher, but an educationist, plunged into educational experiment, into which so many pioneers have been drawn, by the remembrance of their own unhappy

schooldays. "Our childhood should be given its full measure of life's draught... This is what our [of course, he is speaking of India] regular type of school ignores with an air of superior wisdom... It [the ordinary school] is a manufactory specially designed for grinding out uniform results." As a child on entering school, Tagore found his (real, i.e., child) world "vanishing from around, giving place to wooden benches and straight walls staring at me with a blank stare... I was not a creation of the schoolmaster - the Government Board of Education was not consulted when I took birth in the world. Was that any reason why they should wreak their vengeance upon me for this oversight of my Creator?" Is it not strange that the demand for freedom for the child to lead a life in accordance with his stage of life comes from a Rousseau, on the very eve of the French Revolution, and in Russia, from a Tolstoi; in India from a Tagore? It is no use ignoring this unity in demand amidst such a variety of human environment.

The delightful glimpses of a C. D. G. Roberts, in his 'Red Fox,' of a youth brought up in complete sympathy with animal life and nature, shows that East and West meet all the world over, in this matter of an education for children, which shall not ignore, but give full play to, child-nature. We rarely realise how artificial child-training has become. Psychologically, educationists learn the value of training observation through the eye. But why not train other sources of nature-knowledge? "I have no hesitation in asserting that the soles of children's feet should not be deprived of their education, provided for them by nature free of cost. Of all the limbs we have they are the best adapted for intimately knowing the earth by their touch." The feet, therefore, "lose their dignity, and are pampered with socks, slippers, and shoes of all prices and shapes and misproportions." But he is a nature lover, and a forest-lover at that. Absolute simplicity and even poverty, he declares to be educative, for "living richly is living mostly by proxy, and thus living in a world of lesser reality."

With education carried on in this freedom-loving, nature-environed, life-developing manner, no point could be of more importance than the choice of teacher. Tagore has had to find two directors of the work of his school, and it is interesting to note the unity underlying educational tendencies

is typified by the fact that his first teacher was a Hindu, but his successor is (*mirabile dictu*) an American. The first, Satish Chandra Roy, barely 19 years of age, was of a poetic temperament, with a wonderfully spontaneous nature, in touch with boyhood at all stages, but alive to all outward nature, and also a lover of the greatest writings of literary genius - who had no "feeling of distrust for boys' capacity to understand. He made his teaching personal, he himself was the source of it, and therefore, it was made of life stuff, easily assimilable by the living human nature. The real reason of his success was his intense interest in life, in ideas, in everything around him, in the boys who came in contact with him." This wonderful teacher read to the boys Shakespeare and even Browning, explaining to them in Bengali. If one wishes to gauge this achievement, let us ask when will the teacher in Great Britain (the ruling power over India) be sufficiently in sympathy and knowledge with Hindu classics to interest his class in the ideas of Hindu writers? Of course, it will be said: "It would be absurd."

Well, it is precisely this unthinkable enterprise (and more) that the American, Mr. W. W. Pearson the successor to the native teacher of Tagore's school, has taken in hand. West meets East. The George Junior Republic of boy-self-government in America is paralleled in the arrangements of the Bolpur school. "It is the boys' own world; they have their place in school administration and their own Cuts of justice." Moreover, it is of importance to remember that the American teacher, Mr. Pearson, has to administer the school in the spirit of a living (Oriental) religion. Tagore says: "Religion is not a fractional thing that can be doled out in fixed weekly or daily measures as one among various subjects in the school syllabus... it is the true centre of gravity of our life." Openairness, simplicity, leisure, space, fresh air are essential for the spiritual, as well as for the physical education.

It has been said that "there is very little that we [in England] could copy" from Tagore. It would be equally true to say that there is a great deal that we should do well to follow. For there is the whole spirit of educational freedom, of aspiration towards human ideals, and of trust. Our schoolboys are trained, in England, in "playing the game" and we are often rightly and justifiably placed on their

honour. But listen to the account of the boys in Tagore's school: "When an examination takes place the boys may be seen in all sorts of positions writing their answers, even in such inaccessible palaces as the fork of some high tree. . . in their examinations they are left to themselves and put on their honour." Such is the Bolpur effort. They confess failures at times, with some boys.

The volume 'Shantiniketan' gives Mr. Pearson's account of the school and its educational principles, whilst the volume 'personality' contains the important essay of Tagore, "My School." The idea of open-airness, physical, moral, and spiritual, and activity directed from the child's point of view, not from that of the State or even of the parent, doubtless has the future before it, and the strikingly interesting point to note is that a fine native humanist of India is united with the best Western educationists, on common ground, and from within his own conditions he shows himself at least as an equal in educational thought.

**FOSTER WATSON**

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28 July, 1917

### **THE OUTLOOK**

p83-84(W)

### **THE BOOK OF THE WEEK**

**BY ARTHUR WAUGH**

### **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

**MY REMINISCENCES. BY Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.**

Many changes have affected the ideal and practice of English poetry during the last few years; but no change has been more disturbing than the apparent resignation by the artist of the high spiritual sanction of his art. The old tradition held that poetry should transcend life by the virtue of spiritual interpretation: poetry was, as it were, a divine art, reconciling the human pilgrim to the true meaning of his pilgrimage. For such a task poetry must needs be a matter of the most serious import; its practice must be approached in a spirit

of humility, and perfected by intellectual "prayer and fasting." The poet, in short, was of old something between a mystic and a devout. But of late this high estimate has been invaded by the insistent claims of realism. Poetry, we are assured, if it is to satisfy the needs of an eager, actual generation, must deal with the facts of life, not with its dreams. It must represent, not interpret. Life must be drawn bare and bleeding; and the more nakedness and blood there be, the nearer is art approaching to reality. So by degrees it seems as though the familiar, philosophic basis of poetry were about to be abandoned by the new English school of versement; and a sort of superficial, pictorial impressionism were destined to take its place. The age is living too fast to waste time in penetrating into dreamland. The vivid round of experience is a sufficient field of modern art.

If that is to be so there is no doubt that the minds of thinking Englishmen will be forced outside their own country, in search of the proper consolation that poetry should afford; and it may be to some such feeling of unrest that we are to ascribe the steadily increasing influence of the poetry and drama of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. For here, at any rate, in this clear-eyed Indian mystic, with a soul of fire, we have a contemporary poet with no uncertain sense of the importance and authority of the poet's mission. He is the spirit of poetry personified. In Mr. Ernest Rhys's penetrating critical biography he is picturesquely described... "The tall and graceful form in the long loose coat of grey brown: the white, sensitive hands, large, serenely lit eyes, noble features, the stately simplicity of his bearing," and above all "a certain incalculable gaiety... the humour that takes pleasure in the incongruities of men." Uneasy in a great city, - disconcerted by the crowds avid for sensation, and jostling one another in bitter competition, - he loves to escape into privacy, or to the company of a few sympathetic friends. Then, with his peace of mind restored, he is found to be mysteriously shedding his mental serenity throughout his surroundings. A divine peace, that passes understanding, absorbs him into its golden light. He is the watcher on the threshold of life, whispering its secret to any who have ears to hear.

The volume of 'Reminiscences,' which Sir Rabindranath Tagore now gives to the English-

speaking world, is a perfect expression of this serene and visionary temperament. It is quite unlike other autobiographies, in that it deals entirely with impressions and ideas, and not with facts and dates. The ordinary man, sitting down to write his own "Life," begins with the statement that he was born on a certain day, in a certain place, and so forth. He has no personal proof of such a statement; he takes it for a fact, because his parents or guardians told him so. But Tagore takes nothing on the evidence of other people: he begins straight away with the first pictures painted on the tablet of his own memory. And they are pictures of the world outside, viewed from a world within: glimpses through prison-bars. Rain patters, the leaf quivers, the shafts of sunlight filter through the lattice. A child is gazing out from an upper window, across a courtyard to a lighted hall. There is coming and going preparation for a feast; the outside world is calling to the young adventurer. Above all, there is a garden, full of mystic hollows, of broken lights and shadows, and of dim suggestiveness of plaited foliage. Here in the shadow of the tree is a solitude which is not of the world. It beckons enchantingly, with a vague promise of revelation.

When solitude thus reigned over the water, my whole attention would be drawn to the shadows under the banyan tree. Some of its aerial roots, creeping down along its trunk, had formed a dark complication of coils at its base. It seemed as if into this mysterious region the laws of the universe had not found entrance; as if some old-world dream-land had escaped the divine vigilance and lingered on into the light of modern day. Whom I used to see there, and what those beings did, it is not possible to express in intelligible language. It was about this banyan tree that I wrote later.

With tangled roots hanging down from your branches,

O ancient banyan tree,

You stand still day and night, like an ascetic at his penances.

'Do you ever remember the child whose fancy played with your shadows?

Alas! that banyan tree is no more, nor the piece of water which served to mirror the majestic forest-lord! Many of those who used to bathe there have

also followed into oblivion the shade of the banyan tree. And that boy, grown older, is counting the alterations of light and darkness which penetrated the complexities with which the roots he has thrown off on all sides have encircled him.

The child's life is at the beck and call of two voices. One hales the little pilgrim out into the sunlight to learn the secrets of the great world: the other beckons him back into the home, to shelter him from peril and to give him refuge and a rest. In every human abode there is a hidden room like Fatima's, whose door is perplexingly closed to experience.

There was yet another place in our house which I have even yet not succeeded in finding out. A little girl playmate of my own age called this the "King's palace." "I have just been there," she would sometimes tell me. But somehow the propitious moment never turned up when she could take me along with her. That was a wonderful place, and its playthings were as wonderful as the games that were played there. It seemed to me it must be somewhere very near - perhaps in the first or second story; the only thing was one never seemed to be able to get there. How often have I asked my companion, "Only tell me, is it really inside the house or outside?" And she would always reply, "No, no, it's in this very house." I would sit and wonder. "Where then can it be? Don't I know all the rooms of the house?" Who the king might be I never cared to inquire, where his palace is still remains undiscovered - this much was clear - the king's palace was within our house.

It is not perhaps too fanciful to think that in these two pictures we have the key to Tagore's autobiography safe in our hands. For to him Life has always been a pilgrimage backwards and forwards: out of self into the world: and out of the world into the secret heart of man. The child begins as a prisoner in the nursery, beating its little hands at the window, fluttering to get out into the world of movement and adventure. It escapes, and the noise and conflict confuse it. Frightened and uncertain, it turns back again, looking about with wide eyes, for a guide. But there is no guide except its own heart. By looking into his own heart alone can man understand the hearts of his fellow-men. And so

the pilgrimage begins anew, outward and inward, like the shuttle in the loom, till at last the pattern forms itself, and the picture is all aglow.

The solitude of the childish heart beset Rabindranath Tagore with no common intensity. He lost his mother very early, his father was continually away from home: the children were at the mercy of ignorant and cruel servants. They were never allowed to do what they wished: oppressed by blind rules, they were filled with the aching spirit of rebellion. It was the common fault of education, East and West alike, – the senseless infliction of unreasoned discipline.

I now clearly see [he says] that the mistake is to judge boys by the standard of grown-ups, to forget that a child is quick and mobile like a running stream; and that, in the case of such, any touch of imperfection need cause no great alarm, for the speed of the flow is itself the best corrective. When stagnation sets in then comes the danger. So it is for the teacher, more than the pupil, to beware of wrongdoing.

Imperfect sympathy is at the heart of most of this cruelty; but it is a taint that seems inseparable from ignorant authority. In the present case, its immediate effect was the breeding of an intense, subjective egoism, and a kind of rebellious eccentricity, which laughed at prevailing conventions, and found its satisfaction in doing the very opposite to the rest of the world. But all such vain display was really the fruit of suffering. If the mind had been at ease, it would have fallen into tune with its environment. Out of suffering, however (it is a threadbare adage!), the soul achieves enlightenment. Companionship and loss, dreams and disillusionment, love and hate, led the traveller through a sort of Byronic tempest of emotions into the calm backwater of contemplation. The feverish ambitions which disturb the European mind are congenitally alien to the Indian. The young native poets of Tagore's youth assumed the air of rebellion, but there was no natural breeze to keep it stirring. After a few flights of vehement exaggeration, they retired once more into the secret chamber, to commune with their own hearts. Human emotion, they discovered, is only one of the ingredients of poetry: more significant by far is the beauty bred by simplicity and restraint. The

sequel was achievement. Thrown back upon itself, interpreting the world outside in the light of its own eyes, poetry emerged into revelation. "At last," said my heart, "what I write is my own."

My poems have now come to the doors of men  
Here informal goings and comings are not allowed  
There is door after door, chamber within chamber,  
How many times have we to return with only a glimpse  
of the light in the window; only the sound of the  
pipes from within the palace gates lingering in our  
ears! Mind has to treat with mind, will to come to  
terms with will, through many tortuous obstructions,  
before giving and taking can come about. The foundation  
of life, as it dashes into these obstacles, splashes  
and foams over in laughter and tears, and dances  
and whirls through eddies from which one cannot  
get a definite idea of its course.

Gradually, none the less, a philosophy of hope asserts itself. The common distinctions, which the child first observed through its nursery window to be dominating the life of the street outside, are seen to be trash and offal indeed. Differences of caste, religion, race (differences of vital significance to the Eastern tradition) fade into nothingness. The poet is athirst for a more humane order of life. Standing among his English friends, on the crowded London platform, he gives them, a farewell message, the entreaty for a better understanding between the widely-parted peoples of East and West. like St. Paul of old, he urges the claim of an all-embracing brotherhood. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, white nor black, in the eternal Kingdom of Love to which poetry points the way. Poetry has taught him to understand himself, in order that he may understand other men. He exercises his imagination under a divine privilege, yet remains essentially a man among men. His heart aches for the aching heart of humanity, but is never for a moment satisfied with silent sympathy. He smiles with the hope of youth, and joins hands with the resignation of old age. He is an ascetic who has never lost touch with the consolations of humanity: a hermit who goes about doing good: a prophet who is, first and foremost, a friend.

Is not this, after all, the highest function of poetry, and are we to seek it hereafter exclusively among

alien races, who have not yet been subjected to the withering influence of an artificial civilisation? Surely not. The spiritual effluence of poetry changes from age to age in its external forms, but at heart it is unchangeably the same. To look out from its secret window upon the world; to venture forth among its fellow-men; to flee from the crowd and to interpret the crowd's unrest in the faint light of its own unquenchable restlessness, so that the crowd itself may be led at last into the way of peace, - this was always the ultimate task of poetry and no vicissitude of fashion will estrange it from its birthright. It is only for the moment that we have to seek our light from the East. "Ex oriente lux": the law of heaven is inevitable. "But westward, look, the land is bright."

4 August, 1917

#### THE NEW STATESMAN

p427-428(W)

#### THE TRUTH ABOUT TAGORE.

**My Reminiscences.** By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.

After reading the memoirs of almost any writer above or below the level of mere mediocrity, one is inclined to exclaim that such books are the most interesting in the world. Most readers have an inexhaustible appetite for them, as is proved by the public which eagerly swallows the most insipid volumes of reminiscences. There is no nonsense about them; you can base theories on them. For either the author is making confession or you can suspect him of being a liar; and either hypothesis flatters equally our pride in our judgment of humanity. But Sir Rabindranath Tagore's memoirs have a double value. They can be read for themselves alone and they can also be read for the purpose of forming a more definite idea of a writer whom we do not yet perfectly understand. He has been taken down whole by the intelligent public, but criticism has not yet done with him. It has been decided, perhaps, that he is of importance, but not how important he is or in what way or whether in English he may not be more of a curiosity than a

poet. This volume, therefore, apart from the fact that it consists of confessions, is valuable because it furnishes more useful materials for a correct judgment than we have had hitherto.

One thing emerges at once very definitely. Tagore is not the latest voice of an ancient, classical and independent literature, as some of us were led by his first sponsors to suppose; he does not convey a snub from the long-civilised East to the lately barbarous West. It is quite clear from his story that he has seen the creation of modern Bengali literature in his own time, that he stands to it himself (if we may accept his presumed greatness) much as Goethe stood to German literature, and that, like Goethe, he owes a very significant debt to the writers of this country. He says in one passage:

Shortly after, as I added to my years, I attained a place as the youngest of the literary men of the time, but what was to be my position in order of merit was not even then settled. The little reputation I had acquired was nuxed with plenty of doubt and not a little condescension. It was then the fashion in Bengal to assign each man of letters a place in comparison with a supposed compeer in the West. Thus one was the Byron of Bengal, another the Emerson, and so forth. I began to be styled by some the Bengal Shelley. This was insulting to Shelley and only likely to get me laughed at.

Such comparisons as these are not made in a settled literature with a firm tradition of its own; and the conclusion to be drawn is not doubtful. But Sir Rabindranath also indicates here the fact that the Bengal of his youth was a place of great literary excitement and commotion. It is a little difficult to disentangle the artistic and poetical achievements of his six elder brothers, but one of them at least - the eldest - was the author of a work called *The Dream Journey*, which Sir Rabindranath describes with enthusiasm as one of the Bengali classics. Another invented and bravely wore a national costume for all India, which combined the practical advantages of Western tailoring with the grace and dignity of Eastern drapery. His cousins were equally exuberant; and the whole of the second half of this book is a record of literary friendships and discipleships, foundations of Academies and publications of critical reviews. It ends,

unfortunately, in the author's early twenties, and does not tell us how the ferment became more and more productive and how he himself established and developed his reputation. But it goes far enough to show the conditions under which his youth was passed and the influences which formed his talent.

He looks back, like every other poet who has gone through a period of this sort, and distinguishes between the circumstances that were useful to him and those which hurt him. A curious comparison might be made between his reflections and those expressed by Goethe in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. But, whereas Goethe complained that he and his friends received no guidance and were left to create German literature without the restraint of useful criticism, Tagore speaks with much gratitude of his elders and masters. He generously owns his indebtedness to many - to Bankim Babu, who paid a splendid compliment to his first successful book; to Akshay Babu, "who had made the passion in English literature living to us"; and to Rajendralal, the President of the *Sahitya Parishat* (Academy of Literature).

The impression left in the mind of this part of the book is that of a generation suddenly awaking to literary consciousness and proceeding in a great hurry with moods varying from self-confidence to complete reliance on foreign models. The account which Tagore gives of his own poetical growth is not so clear or so vivid. He writes throughout with a sort of half-humorous self-depreciation that is, no doubt, morally commendable, but which ends by getting on the reader's nerves - on ours, at least. His comments on poetry in general, however, are always interesting, as when he says.

I tried to make out (in a lecture) that to bring out better what the words sought to express was the chief end and aim of vocal music. But I must make the confession to-day that the opinion I voiced with such enthusiasm that evening was wrong. The art of vocal music has its own special functions and features. And when it happens to be set to words the latter must not presume too much on their opportunity and seek to supersede the melody of which they are but the vehicle. The song being great in its own wealth, why should it wait upon the words? Rather does it begin where mere words fail. Its power lies in the region of the inexpressible: it tells us what the words cannot... So the less a song is burdened with

words the better... In Bengal, however, the words have always asserted themselves so that our provincial song has failed to develop her full musical capabilities and has remained content as the handmaiden of her sister art of poetry... I have often felt this while composing my songs. As I hummed to myself and wrote the lines I found that the words had no means of reaching by themselves the region into which they were borne away by the tune.

This is a valuable opinion from a practitioner of a literature which has not, like our own, decreed the divorce between music and poetry. Possibly it is wrong, and Tagore's youthful judgment was right, but his considered opinions stimulating and might provoke endless discussions on a difficult and vital question.

So much for this interesting book looked at by itself - but we think its peculiar importance lies in the fact that it gives that last touch to the picture derived from the works already made available in English which throws the whole into proper perspective. It shows Tagore to be, not a typical figure, the Eastern or Indian poet, but a Bengali poet and a member, moreover, of a generation which learnt largely and eagerly from English literature. When he appeared as a representative of the East he caused some disappointment by being insufficiently Oriental; or else his admirers made themselves look foolish by discovering in him Oriental traits that were not there or were long familiar in English poetry. His reputation was liable to suffer either way. There never was much Eastern mystery in Tagore; but so long as his readers looked for it and failed to find it, they were puzzled and more than half-inclined to suspect a deeper mystery than ever. But there is nothing more extraordinary on the entry of Bengali into the company of modern literature than there was in the entry of Russian.

It is not until we cease to look in Tagore for a poet different in kind from our own poets that we can expect to appreciate him justly; and this just appreciation will not now be long delayed. We must learn first to understand that his vision and his methods of expressing it are not wholly alien from those to which we are accustomed; but that he is a poet of a particular sort and not the general interpreter of a whole people. Those who called him the Shelley of Bengal were not very exact epigrammatists; but their heads

were at least pointed in the right direction. It is as foolish to read Tagore keeping in mind all the time the fact that he is an Indian, as it would be to read Shelley against a persistent background of the fact that he was born in Sussex. Tagore is vaguely like Shelley in that he is more occupied with emotions than with persons, with thoughts than with things. He tends, that is to say, to dwell on matters that are common to all humanity; and he lacks, in consequence, the vivid local colour that has been rather idiotically expected of him.

This appears quite plainly in the charming first half of the present volume, a simple narrative from which no other moral can be drawn. The circumstances of Tagore's childhood differ, of course, widely from those of an English childhood. But, even taking into consideration the fact that Tagore is here writing for an Indian and not a European audience, it would be impossible to avoid noticing that very little stress is thrown on these circumstances. The poet is more interested in the thoughts and feelings of the child than in his surroundings; and the local colour might almost have been within the powers of an English novelist who had never been in India. However this may be, it is a singularly faithful and pleasing picture of a little boy; and it will immediately appear so to those who are able to approach it with an open mind and without any absurd craving for a bizarre setting.

This is, perhaps, a pity that the book has not been translated by Sir Rabindranath himself; for, though he has not a native or a remarkable style of English, he writes very smoothly and lucidly. The actual translator is not in any technical sense ignorant of the English language, but he does not achieve a very distinguished prose.

4 August, 1917

**WESTERN MAIL**

p3c2(W)

### "THE CYCLE OF SPRING"

There is the joyous beauty of eternal youth about the allegorical play "The Cycle of Spring" (Macmillan and Co.; 3s. 6d. net), another

Rabindranath Tagore [sic] work to delight his ever increasing Western public. For the satiric there is the irony of the King's vacillation betwixt pundit and poet; for the light of heart the lyrical loveliness of the songs scattered so freshly for youth's chanting [sic] throughout the play, for the studious the solving of the riddle of the poet's words and the conning of the deeper philosophic truths of which hints are given here and there to the King's undoing. One can conceive of only one pleasure surpassing the reading of "The Cycle of Spring", and that... to see it adequately staged

6 August, 1917

**THE NORTHERN WHIG**

p3c2(D)

The writing of Rabindranath Tagore, with their freshness and spirituality of outlook, their richness in thought and imagery, and their wistful beauty, are endeared to a lot of readers who will welcome the poet's "Reminiscences" (Macmillan & Co.; 7s. 6d. net). This volume is fragrant with the same appealing charm as distinguished its predecessors from the same source. It is made up on memory pictures, lightly and even casually presented, rather than a formal biography, yet it reveals, as the translator emphasises, a connected history of the author's inner life, together with that of the varying literary forms in which his growing self found progressive expression up to the point at which both his consciousness and his powers of self-revelation attained maturity.

7 August, 1917

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p3c2(D)

**MY REMINISCENCES. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp. xi. 272. 7s. 6d. net.**

Judged by European standards, the personal records of eminent Indians are apt to appear somewhat thin and vague. It is a commonplace that modern

India has produced hardly a single noteworthy biography, and such autobiographies as have been made accessible in English are mainly interesting for other than personal reasons. Western readers will probably feel that this is true in some degree of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's "Reminiscences", notwithstanding the charming glimpses he gives of life in a Bengali family and the sometimes quite amusing memories of his first stay in England, nearly forty years ago. The Tagore household in Calcutta was far from orthodox in the strict Brahminical sense, but as regards the essentials of rule and custom - and especially the authority of the father, Maharshi Devendranath, seer and religious leader - it belonged emphatically to the old order of India. What perhaps will surprise the English reader most is the description of the way in which the growing boys of the family were left in the power of the servants, and the completeness of their seclusion. Rabindranath, we gather, was almost in his teens before he was permitted even to go into the village lying outside the doors of the Tagore country house. The poet gives in some detail, and with a touch of agreeable satire, an account of his schools and teachers. He recalls the joy of awakening intellectual interest in the company of his father in the Himalayas, and reviews the early literary enterprises which preluded the career that for fame and success has no parallel in the India of our time. The "Reminiscences", written in Bengali, have been translated by a relative of the poet, whose name does not appear. The English is usually good, but there are a few rather bad slips, and there is really no excuse for the occurrence of bad blunders in well-known Indian names, which abound in this volume. The translator has, quite rightly, been very sparing of footnotes, but at times his restraint is carried too far. For example, the poet has a habit of referring to prominent Bengali without troubling about Western ignorance. Very few readers outside India will know who Vidyasagar was, or be able to identify "Bankim Babu" as the most renowned of modern Bengali romancers, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

S.K.R.

9 August, 1917

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p379(W)

### AN INDIAN BOYHOOD

**MY REMINISCENCES. By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.)**

Before the name of Rabindranath Tagore has become known in Europe, the Indian poet wrote down for his own countrymen in Bengali these reminiscences of his boyhood - spontaneous, unaffectedly natural talk such as a man might indulge in amongst friends who he could trust take an interest in the things which had affected him as a child and a young man. A Bengali, speaking to Bengalis, might count on a great mass of common association to give meaning to incidents, to the impressions got from the familiar Indian environment - sky and earth and trees and rivers and men and women, as they are beyond the Himalayas - which they could hardly have for anyone whose early associations had been formed in quite another world. How much, one wonders, must an Indian reader who knows only Bengal miss in Wordsworth's "Prelude"? And yet, in spite of such considerations, one of the poet's countrymen (at least so we gather from his intimation in the preface that he is not "an original writer in the English language") has thought it worth while to translate this book into English for us to read under our Northern skies and trees or amid the turmoil of London.

To invite Englishmen to share these personal reminiscences of an Indian was well done, just because beneath the differences of race and tradition the heart of man is very much the same all the world over. There is much, no doubt, we foreigners must miss - the trains of association which this or that world or image touches off in a Bengali reader. On the other hand, it may be there are certain qualities and values which escape the native and strike the foreigner. One may remember Mrs. Meynell's paradox, that only a foreigner rightly appreciates a language. It is in the same sense in which a man may be better known by his neighbour than by himself. A man, of course, can take completer stock of the contents of his soul than anyone else can, but another person may have a

truer appreciation of his distinctive quality -- the quality shown, for instance, in his unconscious gestures. So, too, in the case of national qualities, it is the people of other nations who often perceive them best. They see the things that are distinctive; the things which natives have no eyes to see because they are too familiar, are taken for granted. There may be a charm for a European in reading such a book of reminiscences in his sense of the differences from his own world in this exotic Indian atmosphere, a charm which may compensate him for what he misses. Yet it is only because there is something in himself which answers to these differences, some potentiality of which the foreign suggestion gives him a new dim consciousness, that he can discern the value of these distinctive things

only because the differences are the last resort but variations of a human nature which, below all the differences is one.

The Indian joint family system makes an environment for the child very different from that of our smaller, more compact households. A community in which the elder brothers, with their wives and children, all live together under the general supremacy of the father seems to make the contact between father and individual child less close than in the normal European family of today. The boy, Rabindranath, the youngest of seven brothers, in the first years to which memory goes back, was left largely to servants to be taught and beaten and fed at their discretion, as were the other children of an age with him. It was possible for one of these servants permanently, it would seem, to injure the digestion of the children by unsuitable diet without the parents taking any cognizance of it. When Rabindranath is sent to school in Calcutta, the school is one where the boys are the least desirable of companions and one of the teachers so foul in his language that "out of sheer contempt for him I steadily refused to answer any one of his questions." And, again, the elder members of the family seem to have been at no pains to ascertain the influences to which the boy was exposed. We get the impression of easy *laissez-faire*, of happy-go-lucky kindly, fecklessness, which so much in India gives to the European. Under such conditions the chances of a boy's growing up in health of body and spirit must depend largely upon whether he is happily endowed by nature with

true instincts. Rabindranath may be taken as a typical example of the *eternals*, the individual guided by a divine instinct to respond to those things which are lovely and to eschew the base. In the evil environment of his school we see him simply shrinking into himself, in the intervals of the classes sitting alone near a window on the second story, gazing into the street and wondering how many more years will go by like this.

In his response to the unnatural world round about him one cannot mark any difference between the Indian boy and the poets of all peoples and ages. He speaks of the extraordinary effect which some of the first lines he learnt to read had upon him: "the rain patters, the leaf quivers" "The rain falls pit-a-pat, the tides comes up the river." He tells us of his first impressions of the country by the river outside Calcutta:

Every morning as I awoke I somehow felt the day coming to me like a new gilt-edged letter, with some unheard-of news awaiting me on the opening of the envelope. And, lest I should lose any fragment of it, I would hurry through my toilet to my chair outside. Every day there was the ebb and flow of the tide on the Ganges; the various gait of so many different boats; the shifting of the shadows of the trees from west to east; and, over the fringe of shade-patches of the woods on the opposite bank, the gush of golden life-blood through the pierced breast of the evening sky. Some days would be cloudy from early morning, the opposite woods black, black shadows moving over the river. Then with a rush would come the vociferous rain, blotting out the horizon; the dim line of other bank taking its leave in tears; the river swelling with suppressed heavings, and the moist wind making free with the foliage of trees overhead.

We are given a series of portraits of different people with whom Rabindranath had to do from childhood to early manhood. Perhaps it is the gentle and delicate humour which characterizes Rabindranath Tagore's attitude to the human world in which more than in anything else the falsehood of the popular fallacy which makes an unbridgeable gulf between the minds of East and West is revealed. There cannot be a very deep gulf where there is a common sense of humour; nothing really

gives a more intimate sense of fellowship than to be amused at the same things. No doubt the Anglo-Indian is often disposed to think that the reason why Indians do things which seem to him ridiculous, or express themselves in ludicrous flowery language, is because they are deficient in a saving sense of humour. Probably some Indians are deficient in this respect. But the writings of Rabindranath Tagore show that subtlety of perception in these things is not confined to Europe. Perhaps if Englishmen have been slow to discover it in India it is because a common sense of humour can hardly reveal itself unless a certain measure of fellowship already exists. There are Englishmen who, even in cases where that fellowship might exist, are too dull to desire it.

There is no generalization we can make about a people but certain individuals show the very antithesis. The great Maharshi, the father of the poet, was as far as it is possible to be from everything shipshod and *laissez-faire*:-

My father was very particular in all his arrangements and orderings. He disliked leaving things vague or undetermined, and never allowed slovenliness or makeshifts. He had a well-defined code to regulate his relations with others and theirs with him. In this he was different from the generality of his countrymen. My father had also a way of picturing to himself every detail of what he wanted done. On the occasion of any ceremonial gathering at which he could not be present he would think out and assign the place for each thing, the duty for each member of the family, the seat for each guest, nothing would escape him. After it was all over, he would ask each one for a separate account and thus gain a complete impression of the whole for himself.

If, as we have seen, the Maharshi did not extend his inquiries to the way in which his youngest son was fed or the morals of the school to which he was sent, that was no doubt in part due to his being a great deal away from home during the poet's early years. According to the Indian tradition, there is much less personal intimacy between father and child than in the modern English family. The Maharshi was largely occupied with the affairs of the Reformed Hindu Church over which he ruled. His tremendous figure is seen only occasionally in

the foreground of the story. Rabindranath, one gathers, hardly came into close relations with his father till he went with him to the Himalayas, after he had been invested with the sacred thread. Yet the Maharshi's strictness did not mean that he was wanting in human understanding. In the cases recorded where he had to make some decision with regard to Rabindranath, his judgment was wise and gentle. He knew where to refrain from restricting his son's liberty:

As he allowed me to wander about the mountains at my will, so in the quest for truth he left me free to select my path. He was not deterred by the danger of my making mistakes, he was not alarmed at the prospect of my encountering sorrow. He held up a standard, not a disciplinary rod.

The society in which, as Rabindranath grew older, he began to make his mark as a poet was one not without stimulus. The set in Calcutta which gathered about the Tagore family was penetrated with literary and artistic interests. The suggestions of English literature counted for a great deal; so far the Tagore coterie did not represent old India, but the new India which is in process of being made under influences from the Western world. Yet the house of Tagore was closely identified with the revival of the national tradition. The Reformed Hinduism of the Maharshi kept much more strictly to traditional Indian lines than the half-Christian Theism of his-disciple Keshab Chandra Sen. The cultivation of the Bengali language was insisted upon against the wholesale Anglicization which was then fashionable in certain circles, with unlovely results. "When on one occasion some new connexion by marriage wrote my father an English letter it was promptly returned to the writer." Rabindranath cooperated with other men of literary enthusiasm who were striving to create a modern Bengali literature.

Rabindranath's experience as a boy and young man seem to have led him to put a high value upon the liberty which allows each individual to find the true path by first trying false ones and to learn moral common-places by actual experience. But perhaps the experiences of the *erorhs* cannot be applied without qualification to those who are less happily endowed by temperament. Some are almost inevitably

carried by the selective instincts of a fine nature away from all aberrations into the true path. In others the baser tendencies are not so easily corrected by experiment. Of that conflict with an inner evil which has been so large a part of some men's experience there is no trace in the story of Rabindranath's youth, as he tells it. He seems only to be moving safely through all phases to maturer wisdom: no storm can permanently turn him out of his course.

Constantly his soul  
Points to its pole,  
Even as the needle points and knows not why.

Yet even in his case his course was hindered and made more painful by the stupidities and cruelties of education as the child experienced it half a century ago; and in the case of other boys Rabindranath Tagore has shown by his actions that whatever his philosophy means, it does not mean that they should be allowed to make their experiments without help and guidance. He has given a large part of his thought to elaborating a reasonable system of education and has chosen in his later life to be not only a poet but a schoolmaster.

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11 August, 1917

## THE CAMBERWELL BOROUGH ADVERTISER

p8(W)

### Section: BOOKS THAT MATTER

By T. McC.

### TAGORE AGAIN

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has recently written his "Reminiscences", which we have not yet seen; but of late, following up his other works, which we noticed in our issue of Feb. 24th, we have taken to several of his dramatic and poetic books, and supplemented these with the biography of the famous Bengal teacher and philosophic poet, by Ernest Rhys (Macmillan. 5s. net).

How much the East differs from the West we

can read in such a biography. The poet was born in Calcutta in 1861, of a noble family. As a child he was placed under private tutors, and was 'given his head' so to speak. 'Words and ideas, music and old tunes, moved him to the heart, and while still a boy he began to write rhymes, songs, stories - anything that could express his joy of life' Like so many young poets, his first strains were of hopeless despair and sorrow, but others followed in a braver key. He married at twenty-three, and took charge of the family estates. Then he came into touch with the real life of the people, and wrote down, hot from life, tales and parables dealing with their every day affairs. There, too, he wrote some of his plays. "The Gardener" (Macmillan 4s. 6d.) reflects this period, which lasted in all some seventeen years. His wife died, his daughter and youngest son, and these trying times are borne testimony to in his "Gitanjali", the book which first showed him as a new force to England readers and thinking circles. As a story writer, playwright, and poet, our readers can get perhaps the best idea of Tagore from Mr. Rhys's very pleasant and informative biography. His little republic school at Shanti Niketan is an experiment in teaching in India, which is likely to rank with the great experimental schools here, on Kindergarten and Montessori systems. Tagore is not only a poet and playwright, but a philosopher and teacher, and he realises that his best seedfields are in the minds of the young. The chapter describing the school, its curriculum and poetic and unique methods, is most interesting. It lets us see a new India coming along, of which neither the modern Anglo-Indian, nor Kipling, nor globe-trotters can give us the faintest notion.

If we turn also to his book on 'Personality', lectures delivered in America, we see the different phases of life and thought which wiser East has inherited from its early thinkers, a mode of thought and idealism which Tagore carries on and exemplifies in his own vivid and wise words.

In 'Sadhana - the Realisation of Life', the author hopes that Western readers will have an opportunity of coming into touch with the ancient spirit of India as revealed in the sacred texts and manifested in the life of to-day. As an interpreter of Eastern thought, Tagore stands as the moment supreme, and much may come in future days of his

fruitful words and discourses. And amid the present bankruptcy of European culture and thought and feeling, it is not difficult to realise Tagore saying, as he has said in his recent lectures in Japan, that Buddhistic thought and the quietism of the East, its wise passiveness and attempt to live in the present day, contrasts favourable with the doctrines of so-called Christianity, as exemplified in the present calamitous war, which is devastating the West, and which can show after 2,000 years of Christ's teaching only a ravaged Belgium, a Serbia, a Poland!

These books are all intensely interesting to the student of thought, no matter whether it arises in the east or the West. Quotations would do injustice to the calm and mature thought of the Bengali poet. One must try and get the atmosphere - the true time and place, to ponder over his Oriental imagery and allusions. But life is the same by the Ganges as by the Thames or the Seine or the Hudson and Mississippi. And the thoughts of Tagore are universal and realised at once as true and good and beautiful. Indeed, Mr. Osborne in his notice of "My Reminiscences", says, perhaps with some of the Oriental hyperbolism of the book, that it is the wisest in the world. So then we may seize it joyfully when it comes in the way, and endeavour to absorb some of its wisdom, so much the more necessary in our unwise and maddening days.

15 August, 1917

**THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST**

p3c2(W)

### **TAGORE'S REMINISCENCES\***

Of the three latest additions to the now large Tagore library, "Shantiniketan" is an account of the school established by Sir Rabindranath Tagore at Bolpur: "Personality" contains a series of lectures he delivered in America on Art, Philosophy, and Education: while the volume of "My Reminiscences" is

\* Shantiniketan, the Bolpur School of Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan (4s. 6d. net.)

Personality, Lectures delivered in America. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. (6s. net.)

My Reminiscences, By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. (7s. 6d. net.)

of an autobiographic character dealing with the experiences of childhood and early manhood that impressed themselves most distinctly on his memory. The poet's family affords a striking example of the heredity of genius. His father was a remarkable man as a musician and a religious reformer, and his children inherited from him their high intellectual gifts. Thus, from his earliest years, the young poet was brought up in an atmosphere of his thinking. His early childhood was, however, far from happy. Perhaps, owing to the frequent absence of his father in religious meditation at Bolpur, the little Rabindranath was left in Calcutta too much in the charge of servants, of whom he could remember little more than their cuffings and boxings. One of those domestic tyrants, who cheated the children of their due supply of food, made up for it by reading to them stories from the old Indian epics by the misty light of a cracked castor-oil lamp. Food for the imagination was also provided by an ancient banyan tree with tangled roots hanging down from its branches, which stood still day and night as if it was an ascetic at his penances. For, like Toru Dutt, his forerunner in the history of Anglo-Bengali poetry, Tagore was haunted through life by the memory of the great banyan tree in the home garden at Calcutta. "Alas," he exclaims, "that banyan tree is no more, nor the piece of water which served to mirror the majestic forest-lord! And the boy, grown older, is counting the alternations of light and darkness which penetrate the complexities with which the roots he has thrown off on all sides have enriched him."

Thus early he formed the habit of communion with nature, and when he was barely eight years old he began to compose Bengali verse. But it was not until manhood that the full revelation of nature was granted to him, so that, like Tennyson, Wordsworth, and many another mystic and poet predecessor in Europe and in Asia, he saw the world apparelled in celestial light. The visionary gleam flashed upon his mind's eye first when he was living with his brother in Sudder Street, Calcutta. He tells how one day, as he was looking out from the verandah of the house, the sun rose over the leafy tops of the trees. "As I continued to gaze, all of a sudden a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes, and I found the world bathed

in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side. This radiance pierced in a moment through the folds of sadness and despondency which has accumulated over my heart and flooded it with this universal light". That weird experience came upon him before he was twenty-two years old. Henceforward the universe had a different aspect in his eyes, for through it all he could now see "the fathomless depth of the eternal spring of joy". Soon afterwards he went to Karwar, of which he gives us an exquisite description in melodious prose. He and his friends glided down the river, while the spell of moonlight brooded over the hills and forest. Presently they left the boat and walked over the sands of the beach. "It was then far into the night, the sea was without a ripple, even the ever-troubled murmur of the casuarinas was at rest. The shadow of the fringe of trees along the vast expanse of sand hung motionless along its border and the ring of blue-gray hills around the horizon slept calmly beneath the sky". The same scene inspired a dreamy poem of absorption in the depth of a starry midnight and also one of the fine artist, with which the volume of *Reminiscences* is adorned. The whole work is a most interesting and frank revelation of the soul of a man of genius gifted in a remarkable degree with the power of self-criticism, who does not think it beneath his dignity to give humorous instances of his own weakness. The irrepressible optimism of his philosophy is a refreshing surprise in these days of distress and conflict. As a record of the development of the philosophic mind and the poetic imagination, Tagore's *Reminiscences* must rank with Wordsworth's "Prelude."

15 August, 1917

**THE YORKSHIRE POST**

p3c2(D)

### **EAST AND WEST**

Time and again Mr. Kipling's famous line about "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" forces itself into mind as one reads "My *Reminiscences*", by Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.) Every now and then one

comes across some difference of outlook or deduction and starts one into realising how hard it is for one race to understand another. And yet the book makes one realise, too, the limitations to the truth of Mr. Kipling's line; for underlying all the differences of race and spiritual and intellectual predilections, one feels our common humanity.

The *reminiscences* cover only the earlier years of his life—his childhood, his education, his early manhood, and the achievement of fame as a Bengali poet. They do not, unfortunately, tell the story of the years that saw the poet win his fame in the West, and the innumerable friends and admirers that the publication of the "Gitanjali" [sic] in English brought him. It is a pathetic, and in some respects, a painful picture that we get of Indian childhood. A sensitive boy, with the bidding soul of a poet, left almost entirely to the tender mercies of servants, and that not through any want of family affection, but simply because it was the custom—the thing seems hardly credible. Consider the horror of this for a child of tender years to have inflicted on him by a servant:

He would put me into a selected spot, and tracing a chalk line all round, warn me with solemn face and uplifted finger of the perils of transgressing this ring. Whether the threatened danger was material or spiritual I never fully understood, but a great fear used to possess me.

As a device for keeping a child quiet when a servant did not want to be bothered looking after him, it has the virtue of novelty; but its effect on the mental development of any child less healthily constituted might have been disastrous. Even greater risks were run. If there was little care for the child's happiness, there was even less about his schooling. His memories of the Normal School, he says, "are not the least sweet in any particular". The boys were so nasty in their manners and habits that it was impossible to associate with them. As for the teachers:

I remember only one, whose language was so foul that, out of sheer contempt for him, I steadily refused to answer any one of his questions. Thus I sat silent throughout the year at the bottom of his class. Fortunately, the boy was one of those rare souls

whom William James has classified as the "once born". He seems to have had an instinctive horror of evil and an instinctive love of all that was noble and pure and of good report. Hence he was able to come in contact with filth and not be defiled

The poetic faculty showed itself in him very early. He had a passionate love of nature and of beauty in every stage and form, and the magic of words laid its spell upon him even before he understood their meaning. The atmosphere amid which he lived was intensely literary and artistic - that is, of course, after he emerged from the care of servants - and one of the most moving sections of the book is that in which he tells of his journey to the Himalayas with his father. To know his father intimately, as he then came to do for the first time, was in itself an inspiration. The hatred of the English language begotten in him by his early attempts to wrestle with its difficulties, gave place to an admiration for its literature - an admiration, however, tempered with cool criticism from his Eastern point of view. What impressed him most was its tumultuousness and lack of restraint, a contrast with the severe reticence he admired so much in the great writers of his own country. He gives a moving picture, too, of the loneliness he had to endure as a stranger when he first came to England to study, and of the warm affection a little kindness shown to him evoked. The book as a whole is a wonderful revelation of the thoughts and aspirations of adolescence and its gradual arrival at maturity; and though its pages are so shed through with humour that it is never dull.

19 August, 1917

**THE OBSERVER**

p4c4(S)

### NEW THOUGHTS IN INDIA

**MY REMINISCENCES** By Rabindranath Tagore.  
(Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.)

Some readers may be disappointed that this is not more of a formal history. The period of Indian activity with which the names of Tagore's father and grandfather are associated is so important that

we should like an account of it from one who can express himself so well and see so clearly as Rabindranath. This book is astonishingly good, better than any of Tagore's works as yet printed in English. In it he gives one a series of impressions, sharp and vivid (a little like Mr. Yeats' "Recollections" in manner), of the outstanding events of his childhood, youth, and early manhood. Never have we read a more entrancing, a nobler, or more dignified chapter than that in which Rabindranath tells how his father took him to the Himalayas, and of their life together there. How sound a relationship was that which enables a son to write:

To the end of his life, I have observed, he never stood in the way of our independence. Many a time have I said or done things repugnant alike to his taste and his judgment, with a word he could have stopped me; but he preferred to wait till the prompting to refrain came from within. A passive acceptance by us of the correct and the proper did not satisfy him; he wanted us to love truth with our whole hearts, he knew that mere acquiescence without love is empty. He also knew that truth, if strayed from, can be found again, but a forced or blind acceptance of it from the outside effectually bars the way in.

That last sentence contains the answer to all theories of persecution; its high acceptance of truth, and the danger which the love of truth entails, has the key to all wisdom.

English people will turn with interest to Tagore's description of his visit to this country - not the recent one, but another undertaken in his youth. He came, it would appear, to an England which had forgotten the fame of Keshub Chunder Sen and Rammohun Roy; and he met with that odd treatment, half-kindly, half-contemptuous, which is too often given to foreigners. His account of the widow who called him "Ruby" is delightful, with a sly, restrained humour, very pleasing in its quality. He was open-minded, and admits that even in the sacred relationship between husband and wife he found English people who reached the ideal Indian standard.

The book is full of shrewd and loving wisdom, especially in the comments on education.

To employ an epic to teach language is like using a sword to shave with - bad for the sword, bad for the chin.

The mistake is to judge boys by the standard of grown-ups to forget that a child is quick and mobile like a running stream; and that, in case of such, any touch of imperfection need cause no alarm, for the speed of the flow is itself the best corrective. When stagnation sets in, then comes the danger. So it is for the teacher, more than the pupil, to beware of wrong-doing.

His judgments on art are more disputable. Such a paragraph as the following could only be accepted with very wide reservations:

And for this, the fact that in English literature the reticence of true art has not yet appeared, is responsible. Human emotion is only one of the ingredients of literature and not its end - which is the beauty of perfect fullness consecrating in simplicity and restraint. This is a proposition which English literature does not yet fully admit.

There seems here to be a confusion between simplicity of thought and simplicity of expression, though in either sense it is difficult to imagine anything "simpler" than a great deal of Milton, of Shelley, or of Burns.

Tagore's account of his own beginnings as a poet are full of lively interest to those who wish to understand the methods of art; indeed, the whole book is one of the most valuable revelations of artistic insight and method, and should be studied by all those who believe that art is little more than a passionate expulsion of prejudices and whims, impressions and opinions. Tagore knows well enough that art has no excuse, nor indeed any real existence, except in union with truth.

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21 August, 1917

**THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST**

p2c7(D)

**Section: CORRESPONDENCE**

## **ART AND TRUTH**

To the EDITOR of the DAILY POST

Sir, - the following remark, from a review of a book ("My Reminiscences", By R. Tagore), seems such an adequate summary of many of the comments on the New Art movement which have been made in these columns that you may perhaps think it worth while to let it appear here. It recalls Ruskin's creed: Art has no excuse, nor indeed any real existence, except in union with truth.

Seaford, August 19.

E.M.S.

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22 August, 1917

**WESTERN MAIL**

p3c2(D)

## **TAGORE'S REMINISCENCES**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has established such a reputation for himself in the Western world that his "My Reminiscences" (Macmillan and Co.; 7s. 6d. net.) will be read with avidity. They are, indeed, vastly different from the autobiography generally given as reminiscences in literary life here. Some of the colloquialisms due to the translator apart, it is Tagore in language, but a new Tagore, with his psychological development from boy to man revealed rather than balder facts of outward life detailed. Not that these are omitted entirely. Much is left to the imagination to fill in - but if the pictures be shadowy, they are literally and artistically so, and, with many passing epigrammatic comments on Indian and English literature and life, will interest the reader of first acquaintance and entrance the admirer of old time. Above all, Tagore's literary work, estimated in quality by himself, will, after reading "My Reminiscences", be looked at in new light.

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24 August, 1917

**MONTROSE STANDARD AND ANGUS AND MEARNS**

p6c1-2(W)

**Section : LITERATURE.**

**MY REMINISCENCE. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. With illustrations. (London: Macmillan & Co.). 7s 6d.**

To take up a book of this quality, for the purposes of this column in any other than the fittingly responsive mood were little short of a crime. One must be receptive and appreciative and not too judicial, in tune with one author, try to understand him by intuition rather than by analysis. Otherwise, not only its flavour but the best of its intellectual substance and thought will be lost. It reveals the graces of a richly-stored mind and a highly refined character. Like a violin, it is to be judged by its tone, not by material and workmanship, although they are both of the best. It is not for the Philistine. He may be imagined refusing to be lifted above himself and seeing in it little more than a collection of Reminiscences of me and Mine, marred by over-concentration upon Self, and stamped with self-consciousness. Such as one is apt to be burdened by precedent; wherein memories of contemporaries, usages, events and minor incidents are grouped round the central figure of the autobiographer. Now, the author himself expressly declares that to read his "memory pictures" as an attempt at autobiography would be a mistake. "If pictures", he says, "which have taken shape in memory can be brought out in words, they are worth a place in literature", and it is as literary material that they are offered. In addition to that, if others can be made sensible of what one has truly felt it is always of importance to one's fellow-men. This is indirectly explained by the Translator, who speaks of the highness of manner and importance of matter combined in the volume. It contains a connected history of Sir Rabindranath's inner life, "together with that of the varying literary forms in which his growing self found successive expression, up to the point at which both his soul and poetry attained maturity". That was in 1912 when the author, in failing health and his fiftieth year, wrote and pub-

lished his Reminiscences in Bengali. The Philistine standpoint and measure may, in fact, be set aside as out of place, alien, and irrelevant. The true test of the book, and of its importance to the reading world are to be found in its elevating potency. He must be a rarity in spiritual habit and intellectual affinities who can read it without feeling himself on an ascent, and in company better at least than his own average self. Truly may introspection become morbid. The resultant extract depends upon the self and experience under examination. Thus, the self-told record of one's inner life may as previously suggested, leave on another mind only a painful sense of self-consciousness. That depends chiefly upon the moral fibre, mental trend, and spiritual outlook of the teller. The direction of these Reminiscences is of necessity inward, but, by reason of the personality to which they are attached, it is also upward. Fineness of shading becomes proof of delicacy of mental texture, and trivialities are accepted as the promptings of candour and as indices of tendency. The whole is read as the voluntary confidences of a cultivated Oriental, a product of another civilization than ours, with different ideals, standards, and creed, but essentially a man of culture. The benefit to be derived from companionship with him thus depends conversely upon the calibre, ideality, and refinement of those who seek it. The illustrations are closely in keeping with the text, in virtue of reflecting its fluctuations of scene, emotion, interest. The portrait of the author in tint, after that by S. K. Hesh, is very beautiful example of the art of reproduction, and makes an effective frontispiece. It is, moreover, an introduction to its subject and tells in advance of a few traits which make their appearance in the narrative, pride without arrogance, intellect spurred by imagination, and thought not altogether free from trouble - we had almost said doubt. There is suffering in the face, but the chief feature is the eye - that of a man looking beyond the limit of clear mental vision into uncertainty, and feeling irked by the sense of perplexity. Likeness is assumed although there is nothing in the portrait foreshadowed in the profile drawing "Tagore in 1877" a boy apparently about fifteen. The other portraits, of father, cousin Satya, and two brothers are dexterous drawings, telling a little, suggesting more, and leaving imagination with clear directions how to do the

rest. The other plates are in what may be called the impassionist style, and in two Ganges views, "Moonlight", "The Himalayas" and "Karwar Beach" we see how much can be done with it, to what splendid purpose it can be worked by one who knows how to handle it. It is marvellous how much can be told yet so little said. Between the realism of the frontispiece and the inexhaustible suggestiveness of the beach and mountain scenes the distance is far, and equally far apart in the literary range are the sketches of child life the landscape vignettes, the farewell to such dying usages as the mujlis or informal social gatherings, the sprinkled apothegms and such passages as one treating of the distinction between European music and that of India - "They do not gain entry to the heart by the selfsame door". As the individual life is traced many glimpses are obtained of India ways and styles of living, more especially in chapters like "Servocracy" and "My Home Environments". It is possible also to follow young Tagore's education, although the several stages are not very defined. Again, many characters, both Hindoo and English, are introduced, whose alternate grotesqueness, fidelity, queerness of function, or other characteristics enliven the book. It is, however, necessary to keep in mind that what we are promised is not a string of incidents but the history of an inner life, and Iswar, Niyamet the tailor, Aghore Babu, and many more, are only legitimately admissible to the little stage, so far as their parts contribute to the central movement and purpose. Gobinda Babu certainly discharges a useful office. He commissioned the boy, his pupil, to write a poem on high moral precept, which he presumably supplied. Thereupon the comment of the budding poet follows: "The only praiseworthy thing about this moral poem was that it soon got lost". With him stands old Kailash, cashier and wit, who dies and, via a planchette, sends back from the other world a message showing that his wit at least was not dead. Asked what kind of life he was leading, he replied - "Why should you get so cheap what I had to die to learn?" Kailash evidently might have been Scots. Again, at the Oriental Seminary, one form of punishment was to pile slates upon the culprit's outstretched palms, and the dry comment follows - "It is for psychologist to debate how far this method is likely to conduce to a better grasp of things". If the reader will now

turn to the frontispiece and try to take in all that it implies of aloofness and dignity and then turn to page 9 and read that the subject of the portrait knew in youth nothing of luxury or delicacies, that a list of his clothes would only invite a modern boy's scorn, that he had neither socks nor shoes on his feet until his tenth year, he may be able to sense the humour that ripples through the pages. Sometimes it is unconscious. It is hard to look at the knightly figure in the portrait and then think composedly of him at any stage of existence creeping out behind his elders to see the forbidden sights of a Bengal village, and caught in the act, being sent home in disgrace - "Get away, get away, go back at once"! they scolded. They were scandalised. My feet were bare, I had no scarf or upper robe over my tunic, I was not deemed fit to come out; as if it was my fault! I never owned any socks or superfluous apparel" Poor Sir Rabindranath! It is so excruciatingly pitiful that, once more looking back, one can no longer see the fine lines and exquisite shade of the Hesh portrait for tears! The author must have been in a precisely similar stage of mind when he wrote of Aghore babu, English tutor, that he once got a broken head in a student fight - "a regrettable occurrence; nevertheless we were not able to take it as a personal sorrow, and his recovery somehow seemed to us needlessly swift". A sense of humour, bubbling and spontaneous, in short, permeates the book, and reaches its most perfect form probably in the story of the faked poems of Bhanu Singha, and how Nishikanta Chatterjee won his Ph.D. Without wishing to emphasise the point, the appreciation of the humours is akin to that of the joys of life and discoveries side by side the sources "from which numberless sprays of laughter leap up throughout the world". Sensitiveness to external impressions is allied with the poetic vision touched into activity in "Morning Songs", where the poet who "from infancy had seen only with my eyes, now began to see with the whole of my consciousness", and to penetrate the immeasurability behind the trifling phenomenon and action. Writing verse was suggested to him at the age of eight. He got a blue-paper manuscript book, filled it and it passed into oblivion, but whether by outward prompting or as an inward growth "practising poetry" remained, became a habit, and

an irregular, spasmodic process went on which is traced through the monthly "Gyanankur", the "Bharati" - when about sixteen - his first book "Kavikahini", "Bhagna Hriday" (or "the Broken heart") - when eighteen - the "Valmiki Pratibha", and so on to "Heart Wilderness" and "Morning Songs", previously mentioned. All this period was one of utter disorder, down to about twenty-three, and the author writes of it, oblivious of the fact that he is lighting up a parallel passage in many minds. "at this age of unmeaning activity, when my undeveloped powers, unaware of and unequal to their object, were jostling for an outlet, each sought to assert superiority through exaggeration". It might, perhaps, be clearer to say that the force of the internal energy caused it to break out in irregular, violent, and undirected expulsions, the more obvious results of which were unreality and exaggeration. An echo of this is found in our lives, but there is no parallel to the numerous digressive comments, as one mean the absence from English literature of "the reticence of true art", and these both enrich the story of personal development and illustrate its progress. The objective part of the narrative visits to England, and the like, are for all to understand without much reflection or inquiry, but the best of the volume, "More about 'The Evening Songs,' " "Sharps and Flats" and nearly all that comes between, cannot be assimilated without both - cannot even be intelligently enjoyed. The volume possesses distinction, individuality, and introducing a personality both attractive and rare, is so far companionable as to be entitled to a place in the library of Friends at Sundown.

25 August, 1917

**THE NATION**

p536-537(W)

### MEMORIES OF A POET

**My Reminiscences.** By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan. 7s 6d. net.)

It has been said that there are two Tagores. There is the Tagore who writes in his native language, and whom we know to our delight through trans-

lations. And there is the Tagore who imitates this Tagore in English, and whom we know to our sadness in the original. We have heard a great poet content that there is as much difference between Tagore as a Bengali writer and Tagore as an English writer as there is between Milton as an English writer and Milton as a Latin writer. There is, we believe, no example of a great author writing equally well in two languages. Even Heine could not do it. Mr. Conrad has, in some miraculous way, been able to exchange one language for another; but, had he not abandoned Polish altogether, he would hardly have been able to write "Typhoon" and "Heart of Darkness" in English. English, after all, is the language of the central experiences of his life. He is a voyager by genius, and he made his voyages in English. Sir Rabindranath Tagore is in a different case entirely. He is a Bengali to the heart. His genius is not akin to the English in any important respect. The English language cannot be said to have provided him with a spiritual home. That is why he cannot express himself, but can only imitate himself, in English.

"My Reminiscences" is a book which was clearly written for his own people. It was written in 1912, when the author was in his fiftieth year, before he came to the West in a visit which made him one of the famous writers of his time. Here we have it in a translation - in a translation by no means perfect - but how much finer, how much more intimate and easy it is than anything the author has set himself to write for us in English! If it is safe to prophesy immortality for anything Sir Rabindranath Tagore has written, it is safe to prophesy it for this. It is the sort of book which one wishes every poet would write. It is not so deliberately concerned with the growth of a poet's mind as "The Prelude". One may compare it rather with Mr. Yeats' "Reveries over Childhood and youth". It is like both these books, however, in mapping out the regions in which a poet's genius tried its wings and adventured into triumph. It would not be easy to imagine a more unpropitious environment for a poet's childhood than the Tagore household. It was a house in which the children saw little of their parents, but had to spend their days in the servants' quarters. "Going out of the house was forbidden to us; in fact, we had not even the freedom of all its parts". Had the servants been kind to the children, their company might have been the best thing in the

world for a young poet. Servants of the right kind are often franker in their human nature and less stiffened by convention and pretence than parents, and may be easily a fortunate part of a child's education. But the Tagore servants were not of this kind. "Of most of these tyrants of our childhood, I remember only their cuffings and boxings".

There was, however, one of the servants who had once been a schoolmaster, and who used to keep the children quiet in the evenings by reading out stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

"The lamp would be throwing huge shadows right up to the beams of the roof, the little house lizards catching insects on the walls, the bats doing a mad dervish dance round and round the verandahs outside, and we listening in silent, open-mouthed wonder".

Going to school seems to have been scarcely a happier experience to the young Tagore than staying at home under the iron rule of the servants. At school, too, the discipline was hard:

"The boy who was unable to repeat his lessons was made to stand on a bench with arms extended, and on his upturned palms were piled a number of slates"

The child, however, succeeded in getting a certain amount of pleasure by inventing a game in which he himself figured as the schoolmaster:

"I had started a class of my own in a corner of our verandah. The wooden bars of the railing were my pupils, and I would act the schoolmaster, cane in hand seated on a chair in front of them. I had decided which were the good boys and which the bad - nay, further, I could distinguish clearly the quiet from the naughty, the clever from the stupid. The bad rails had suffered so much from my constant caning that they must have longed to give up the ghost had they been alive. And the more scarred they got with my strokes the worse they angered me, till I knew not how to punish them enough."

Of the second school which he attended, and where he was also unhappy, he remembers only that the boys were "nasty" in manners and habits,

and that one of the teachers used language so foul that, "out of sheer contempt for him, I steadily refused to answer any of his questions". Were it not for the gentle, amiable way in which Sir Rabindranath Tagore tells his story, one would heartily pity him for having passed his childhood in unusually harsh surroundings. But somehow or other he casts an idyllic glamour over those early days, and leaves us with none of the sense of unhappiness with which a Russian writer would leave us in similar circumstances. The children of the Tagore house "had to get up before dawn, and, clad in loin-cloths, begin with a but or two with a blind wrestler". Then came private lessons from six till half-past nine from a master who "looked like a cane incarnate". School followed, and, when the children got home, the gymnastic masters were waiting for them "In the evening Aghora Babu came for our English lessons. It was only after nine that we were free". It was at the age of eight that Sir Rabindranath Tagore began to write verse, and he did so, not as a result of any inspiration, but at the suggestion of "a son of a niece of my father's", who one day, for no apparent reason, "asked me to try and make up a verse". Henceforth he was a dedicated poet, filling first a blue manuscript-book, and afterwards a Letts's Diary with his scribbling. He even began to adopt the swagger and attitude of a poet "When I wrote poetry at Bolpur", he tells us, "I loved to do it sprawling under a young coconut palm. This seemed to me the true poetic way". His imagination was awakened some time later by a prolonged visit to a riverside villa on the Ganges where an epidemic of fever raged at Calcutta, and, though he was still scarcely allowed to budge from the house,

"The Ganges freed me from all bondage, and my mind, whenever it listed, could embark on the boats gently sailing along, and hide away to lands not named in any geography"

There was never a poet who lived a more sheltered life. Jane Austen did not live in a cage to nearly the same degree. None the less, he had the experiencing heart, and to the true artist that is the first necessity. He had also books and he loved to let his imagination linger on such lines from the poets as:

"The night that was passed in the lonely forest cottage"

Then, suddenly, his father began to take notice of him, and took him off with him on a journey to the Himalayas. "This was the first time in my life that I had a full suit of clothes made for me". One cannot help smiling at the way in which the father sought to continue the education of the child during the journey.

"My father brought with him some volumes of the Peter Parley series from which to teach me. He selected the "Life of Benjamin Franklin" to begin with. He thought it would read like a story-book, and be both entertaining and instructive. But he found out his mistake soon after we began it. Benjamin Franklin was much too businesslike a person. The narrowness of his calculated morality disgusted my father. In some cases he would get so impatient at the worldly prudence of Franklin that he could not help using strong words of denunciation".

But the little boy also applied himself to Sanskrit and to Proctor's "Astronomy". One would imagine from the early part of the book that the elder Tagore was a negligent parent. He was certainly so from the contemporary Western point-of-view. But his son's memories of him are all pious. "He never", he declares, "stood in the way of our independence". Towards the end of his life, when he was bed-ridden, the old man sent for his son one day.

"He asked my brother to accompany me on the harmonium, and got me to sing my hymns one after the other. Some of them I had to sing twice over. When I had finished it he said

"If the King of the country had known the language and could appreciate its literature, he would doubtless have rewarded the poet. Since that is not so, I suppose I must do it." With which he handed me a cheque."

One thing the younger Tagore inherited from his father was a passionate Indian patriotism. Those were the days in which movement comparable to the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin was coming to birth in Bengal.

"When on one occasion some new connection by marriage wrote my father an English letter, it was promptly returned to the writer".

As a boy, young Tagore belonged to a political society which met in darkness, talked in whispers, and possessed a pass word. Sir Rabindranath Tagore does not take his political past very seriously, but it is clear enough from what he writes that an accident or foolish step on the part of the authorities might have easily brought him to the same end as the Irish poets of Easter week. "I firmly believe", he declares, "that if in those days Government had provided a frightfulness born of suspicion, then the comedy which the youthful members of the association had been at might have turned into grim tragedy". The young patriots wrote national songs, invented an unwearable national costume, and attempted to found national industries, sometimes with comic results.

Afterwards came a visit to England and a time of absorption in English literature. On the whole, Tagore cannot be regarded as an enthusiast either for England or English literature. English literature, he thinks, reflects at its greatest a certain "bacchanalian revelry" of emotion rather than the quiet of truth and beauty.

"Glancing back at the period of which I tell, it strikes me that we had gained more of stimulation than of nourishment out of English literature. Our literary gods then were Shakespeare, Milton, and Byron, and the quality of their work which stirred us most was strength of passion. In the social life of Englishmen passionate outbursts are kept severely in check, for which very reason, perhaps, they so dominate their literature, making its characteristic to be the working out of extravagantly vehement feelings to an inevitable configuration. At least, this uncontrolled excitement was what we learnt to look on as the quintessence of English literature".

As for his life in England, it provides him with the subject of one of the most amusing narratives we have read for a long time. His account of the widow of the Anglo-Indian official and the way in which she compelled him to sing a commonplace dirge for her dead husband to a certain Indian

mode - made him sing it again and again in all sorts of company whenever she met him - proves that the essence of humour is not so exclusively Western a quality as some people seem to think. This lady, we are told, called him "Ruby", and on one occasion even made him stand outside the door of a bedroom in which a friend of her's was lying ill, and chant the dirge on the landing.

In his youth, Tagore composed many of his poems to tunes written by his brother or adapted from European sources. He traces the beginning of the emancipation of his genius to the departure of his brother on his travels, which left him to his own devices. And he makes the odd confession that he owes something of his self-realization at this time to the fact that he began to use a slate to write on -

"I began to use a slate for my writing. That also helped in my emancipation. The manuscript books in which I had indulged before seemed to demand a certain height of poetic flight, to work up to which I had to find my way by a comparison with others. But the slate was clearly fitted for my mood of the moment. 'Fear not', it seemed to say. 'Write just what you please; one rub will wipe all away!'"

By a curious chance, one of the prison circumstances which, according to Mrs. Henry Hobhouse, causes most acute misery to some of the Conscientious Objectors serving terms of hard labour, is being denied any writing materials except a slate and a pencil. And we fancy few people with the passion for writing will agree with Sir Rabindranath Tagore's praise of the slate. The young poet was about twenty at the time in a very holiday of the arts. "We wrote, we sang, we acted, we poured ourselves out on every side". On the relation of poetry to music in Bengali literature, on the order and nature of his own compositions, and on the native literature that influenced him and the other poets of the Bengali renaissance, there is much that is fascinating in these reminiscences. But for ourselves we are interested in no part of the volume so keenly as in the little passing portraits that the author drops so skilfully and so freely into his narrative. How delightful, for instance, is the portrait of the Persian tutor with whom the Tagore boys used to play truant:

"He was of middle age, and all skin and bone, as though dark parchment had been stretched over his skeleton without any filling of flesh and blood. He probably knew Persian well, his knowledge of English was quite fair, but in neither of these directions lay his ambition. His belief was that his proficiency in singlestick was matched only by his skill in song. He would stand in the sun in the middle of our courtyard and go through a wonderful series of antics with a staff - his own shadow being his antagonist. I need hardly add that his shadow never got the better of him, and when at the end he gave a great, big shout and whacked it on the head with a victorious smile, it lay submissively at his feet."

Not many readers would have expected that the author of "Gitanjali" possessed so pretty a vein of humor as appears in some of these stories.

"My Reminiscences", we fancy, will be the most lastingly popular and charming, it reveals a poet and it reveals a people. Autobiography so fine as this does not appear more than three times in a generation.

25 August, 1917

**THE SPECTATOR**

p191-192(W)

## MEMORIES OF A POET

By **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE\***

"THERE is no event in my reminiscences", says Sir Rabindranath Tagore in his introductory pages, "worthy of being preserved for all time. But the quality of the subject is not the only justification for a record. What one has truly felt, if only it can be made sensible to others, is always of importance to one's fellow-men. If pictures which have taken shape in memory can be brought out in words, they are worth a place in literature". The present volume is a series of such pictures, and is well worth a place in literature. It is not in

\*My Reminiscences. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. [7s 6d net.]

any sense an autobiography, still less is it a collection of idle gossip and worn-out stories such as has frequently of late ears been trust upon the world under the title of "Reminiscences". The incidents it describes are subjective more often than objective, and even in this limited field it does not aim at narrative completeness; very often we are left to our imagination to fill up the gap between one event or emotional epoch and another; but the various sections fall naturally into chronological order, and taken consecutively from a most curious and fairly full history of the development of a poet's mind.

In the frankness of its self-revelation and the naivete combined with the latent vigour of the style, it reminds us of Yoshio Markino's *When I was a Child*; but there the resemblance ends. The nature of the Japanese artist was intensely ambitious, his mind practical and scientific, his progress the result of conscious effort towards a determined goal. The Hindu poet belonged to a more meditative type, and made no attempt to direct his career beyond following where his genius led him; sometimes it brought him down mental; No thoroughfares, and sometimes the current of his thought apparently reversed and he returned to modes he had previously quitted. "The only way of learning how to use a thing properly", he tells us, "is through its misuse. For myself, at least, I can truly say that what little mischief resulted from my freedom always led the way to the means of curing mischief." And so eventually, and almost, as it were by accident, he came into his own, he found out what he was best fitted to do, and how best to do it.

He began with the pure sensuous joy of rhyme and rhythm, he delighted in subtle variations and repetitions of the open vowel sounds; he was a stylist as defined by Brunetiere: "Un homme qui pour elle-meme". Then, wanting material for artistic treatment, he was caught by the appeal of the external world for adequate description. the companionship and example of relatives devoted to the cultivation of native are awoke in him the spirit of nationality, and his powers flowed for a while into patriotic verse, music and drama. At another period he passed into the realms of mysticism, and his students found him hard and unintelligible; for the tragedy of the mystic is that he

can never express his vision fully to his fellow-men. The nature of his message is so transcendental that neither printed words nor sounds nor line nor colour can convey it. He has to sacrifice clearness and detail to gain any true effect of the intense blaze of inward illumination that possesses him, and the critic who is looking for facts and logic is left hopelessly bewildered. The mystic speaks to those alone who have ears to hear him, and the most just comments from those who have not the apprehending sense area as much beside the mark as the opinions of a tone-deaf man of the C Minor Symphony. But from this phase Sir Rabindranath emerged with the broader philosophy and simpler style which the British public have learned in some measure to recognize and appreciate.

We could quote many passages to illustrate the sweetness and shrewdness and quiet wisdom and good humour of these *Reminiscences*, but without their context they would lose half their value. The book needs to be read through to produce its proper cumulative effect. It contains, besides, much to attract even those who are not interested in the psychological aspects of literature: quaint character sketches to teachers, friends, and fellow-students, vivid pictures of Indian habits and scenery, analyses of child mentality done with extraordinary insight and sympathy. We extract one anecdote characteristic of the undercurrent of demure fun which ripples beneath almost every page:

"We had an old cashier, Kailash by name, who was like one of the family. He was a great wit and would be constantly cracking jokes with everybody, old and young, recently married sons-in-law, newcomers into the family circle, being his special butts. There was room for the suspicion that his humour has not deserted him even after death. Once my elders were engaged in an attempt to start a postal service with the other world by means of a planchette. At one of the sittings the pencil scrawled out the name of Kailash. He was asked as to the sort of life one led where he was. 'Not a bit of it', was the reply. 'Why should you get so cheap what I had to die to learn?'"

*13 September, 1917***THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p135(W)

**THE PROTEST OF A SEER****NATIONALISM. By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.)**

In his great parable of the Cave, Plato describes how those few who had escaped for a while to look on the world of light outside, the world of Ideas, of the things which are true and are eternal, came back with eyes which had somewhat lost the habit of distinguishing things in the cave's obscurity; they might even incur the laughter of their fellow-cave-men who were at home in their own perpetual twilight. This book is the book of a poet and a sage who has looked on the light of the Ideal; perhaps to some of the people of the cave it will seem foolishness; perhaps its judgments as to the facts of the world are to some extent mistaken. That upon Sir Rabindranath Tagore here passes judgment is, indeed, nothing less than the mass of activities and tendencies and standards of value which constitute the modern world, the world into whose movement even Japan and China and the poet's own Indian have, for better or worse, been drawn. Every man who thinks at all has already formed some judgments of his own about these things; to many the poet's verdict may be a challenge.

The first impression of the poet's view of the world, as set forth here, may be a rather confusing one to an English reader; he will be aware of a general repugnance to Western civilization on its political and industrial side, yet he may remain in some doubt as to the precise grounds of the repugnance. Yet it would seem that all the elements in the view here set forth have their analogy among ourselves, and it is by resolving it into these elements that we can best understand it. We may believe, indeed, that while the poet's judgments spring mainly from his own temperament and his own spiritual sense, in his formulation of them and in his reading of the facts of the Western world he has been not a little influenced by Western seers and critics. We must think of Wordsworth and Ruskin, in their abhorrence of the modern industrial world, the ugliness and vulgarity of its products, in contrast with

a world of dignified simplicity which they saw in the past or passing away; we must think of Tolstoy, his repudiation of the very bases of our present Western civilization as selfishness and lust; we must think of the depreciation of "intellectualism," of material science, as against intuition and instinct, which has been fashionable in recent years; we must think of that insistence upon the evil of national antagonisms which has marked many writers since the outbreak of the war. Roman Rolland, Mr. Bertrand Russell, and others, and, above all, we must think of the picture we have had set so constantly before us of late, the picture of the State as conceived by Germany - a machine organized for power, horribly efficient for its own task, soulless and merciless, in which men have given up their human individuality and freedom to become mere parts of a mechanism. Think of all these things in a sort of indistinct fusion, and one has the substance of the poet's view of the world.

In Sir Rabindranath's arraignment of the idea of "the Nation" some misapprehension may be caused by his using the term nation instead of the term State. It is the State which, according to the German definition, is an organization for the purposes of power, and we may allow that the German definition expresses part of the truth. What constitutes a nation is not organization as a single State (although in certain cases Nation and State coincide), but a single tradition expressed in a common language, a common literature, a common body of customs and memories of things done or suffered together. A great deal of that national aspiration which we have to deal with in the suppressed nationalities of Europe or in India is really a desire to maintain the national tradition in its distance character against alien influences. It is the nation, the great body of undefinable things which constitute its life, the country with whose visible hills or plains a thousand memories are united - it is this which men love and for which they are willing to die, not the mere State as an organized political system. And when Sir Rabindranath attacks the State, calling it the Nation, it is not merely an idiosyncrasy in the use of words. Whilst a great deal of what he says applies only to the State, and not the Nation, he also has in mind things which apply to the Nation rather than the State. The dislike, for instance, of one nation for

another, international hatred, is something much more primitive and instinctive than a conflict between State, something which has nothing to do with any political organization. No doubt when States are in conflict national feelings comes in too and gives its bitterness to the struggle. And it is a question what this feeling is worth. There are people who consider that all sense of national distinctions is a survival of barbarism and evil. It is certain that national feeling, when it means hatred and contempt for other nations as such, is an evil. Yet if the variety of national traditions is in itself a good, if they each embody some peculiar elements of value, necessary for the full expression of Man, then the special love which we have for our own nation and country is not incompatible with our love for mankind as a whole. As men are, the good and evil in national feeling seem to be very variously mingled. But because in some degree the nobler element is found in almost all national feeling, that feeling, while it may make the conflict between States more bitter, may also in a way serve the conflict from being as base as it would be if it were a mere fight between two organizations for power. If in some future state of the world the fights are fought between huge international commercial syndicates, that will be worse than fights between national States. Even where a man fights for his country because he believes it to be in the right, that is not altogether ignoble. He is not fighting merely as the part of a machine.

As to the modern State itself, what are we to say of Sir Rabindranath's indictment? It is very much the same as what we say of Germany. Only Sir Rabindranath does not say it of Germany in particular; he says it of all modern Western States - England included. Looked at from within, the British State does not present the appearance of an organization crushing individual liberty. A large part, indeed, of our people have small scope for spontaneous activity, for the development of personality; but it is not the State which confines them within a round of labour without joy; it is the economic struggle. Those who have the means and the leisure - the literary men, for example, of whom Sir Rabindranath speaks so warmly - do not find their self-chosen activities hampered appreciably by the State. But Sir

Rabindranath, we must remember, is not looking at the British State from within. He is thinking of the way in which England exercises her organized power in regard to other peoples, and especially his own people. And he seems to see all Western States alike acting everywhere to establish their power for power's sake or for the sake of material gain. He says a great deal in relation to Indian nationalism which we might be inclined to emphasize, as justifying the opposition to it on our side. He considers that young India's cry for political power is a mistake, that the way Indian nationalists would go is not India's true path. He makes no attempt to deny or minimize the fatal divisions of Indian society, the exclusiveness of castes, the oppression of Indian by Indian.

When our nationalists talk about ideals they forget that the basis of nationalism is wanting.

When we talk of Western Nationality we forget that the nations there do not have that physical repulsion, one for the other, that we have between different castes. . . And can we ever hope that these moral barriers against our race amalgamation will not stand in the way of our political unity?

And the Anglo-Indian will, perhaps, underline such sentences as these. But if we are going to call in Sir Rabindranath as a witness we must not only pick out the utterances we like. He is, one divides, no admirer of the British rule. For him it would appear to be only the nearest instance of the Western State imposing its mastery for selfish ends by virtue of a scientific organization. And to the poet, mastery and science and organization are all three unlovely. We must think how a Germany victorious by an organization of irresistible efficiency would appear to us in order to realize how England - our England, that seems so different to us from within - may appear when all that is seen of it is, to use Sir James Stephen's phrase, a "belligerent civilization" imposing its will upon an alien people. We often justify our rule in India by its superior efficiency. Perhaps, in all circumstances, that may be a justification. Only we must remember that if Germany were victorious its every efficiency would cause a shrinking of our sensitive fibres as from an inhuman machine. We say that we are in India to introduce the valuable things of our civilization.

That sounds very like what the Germans say of their *Kultur*.

This is not to admit that the poet's view is just. It is not true that the public action of England as a State has been inspired simply by the desire for power and material gain. One hopes that increasingly a great moral ideal is becoming discernible as that which the federation of peoples included in the British Commonwealth are called to realize. On the other hand, it would be vain to deny that the love of power and the love of gain are motives which have had their share in the building up of the British Empire. If we do not think the poet's view fair, we may allow that from his standpoint it is explicable.

That which really grieves his soul, one thinks, is not so much the rule of a particular foreign nation in his land as large characteristics in the modern world as a whole - the complexity and crowded hurry, which makes it so hard to bring life to a harmony and find space for the old human charities and for the stillness of spirit necessary in order to reflect the beauty of the world. It may be that the past which he contrasts with the modern world is largely idealized. The love of power and the love of gain have been powerful in men's hearts since the world began. They operate as much in an Indian village as in London or New York. The trouble of the modern world is not in its new organization, but in the old selfishness which uses the organization. There can be no real cure for the evils felt by the poet which does not involve a change of heart.

As to immediate practical problems, the book does not give much guidance. If we ask what Sir Rabindranath would like to substitute for the present *regime* in India, or how the economic needs of mankind are now to be supplied without a complex industrial organization, we get no answer. It is enough that he indicates evils and dangers in the present system. It is for us to recognize those evils and dangers, and consider the way of salvation. That way cannot be found in going back to a primitive simplicity, any more than a man can save himself from the evils and dangers incidental by growing up by going back to childhood. The modern world by its science and its organization has enormously increased its riches, and we have good authority for believing that it is hard for the rich to enter the

Kingdom of God. Yet we have the same authority for believing that there exists a spiritual Power which makes this possible. The more knowledge and means of command over nature man has at his disposal the more complex becomes the spiritual problem he is set to solve, but the richer in spiritual value the result if he succeeds.

15 September, 1917

THE NEW STATESMAN

p571(W)

### AN EASTERN VIEW OF EUROPE

**Nationalism.** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 4s. net.

It is difficult for any European, and particularly for an Englishman, to read this book with the patience and detachment which it deserves. Here we have a distinguished Eastern poet, whose distinction has been officially marked by an English title, telling us what the East thinks of Europe and the fine power of European civilisation, nationalism. And we do not turn any pages before we read this: "This abstract being the Nation, is ruling India. We have seen in our country some brand of tinned food advertised as entirely made and packed without being touched by hand. This description applies to the governing of India, which is as little touched by the human hand as possible." Many Englishmen, after reading that sentence, will very probably feel inclined to throw the book aside. After all, it is well known that Asiatics are incompetent to govern themselves, and that for the first time in its long history India has gained an orderly and happy existence under British rule. That, however, it is well sometimes to remember, is only the picture which we see in the national looking-glass, and it is proverbially a good thing occasionally to see ourselves as others see us. Sir Rabindranath Tagore tells us what he and Asia think of us and our ways with remarkable candour. He points out that Western civilisation culminates and centres in the Nation. He defines the Nation as the organised union of people for political and economic efficiency. His argument, as we understand it, is that Western people

have come to judge the goodness and badness of his organisation solely by the standard of its mechanical efficiency. Thus the Nation, as deified and worshipped abstraction no worse and no better than Moloch and Baal, is in reality only "the organised self-interest of a whole people, where it is least human and least spiritual." Nowhere is this abomination more abominable than when, as in the British rule of India, the Nation going outside its own boundaries imposes upon other people - for their own good - the machine-made happiness which it insists upon its subjects feeling in organised law and order. He gives us, it is true, credit for the gift of law and order in India. But he apparently considers that British law and order has been purchased at too high a price. He points out that India has known before the domination of alien thrones, but "they passed over her head like the clouds, now tinged with purple gorgeousness, now black with the threat of thunder," but like the clouds they did not thwart or check the personal life of the people. But the rule of the Nation is different, it fixes its claws deep into the individual's life, and yet it is an inhuman and impersonal abstraction. "The governors need not know our language, need not come into personal touch with us except as officials; they can aid or hinder our aspirations from a disdainful distance, they can lead us on a certain path of policy and then pull us back again with the manipulation of office red-tape; the newspapers of England, in whose columns London street accidents are recorded with some decency of pathos, need but take the scantiest notice of calamities which happen in India over areas of land sometimes larger than British Isles. But we who are governed are not a mere abstraction. What comes to us in the shape of a mere bloodless policy may pierce into the very core of our life, may threaten the whole future of our people with a perpetual helplessness of emasculation... I ask you what disaster has there been in the history of man, in its darkest period, like this terrible disaster of Nation fixing its fangs deep into the naked flesh of the world, taking permanent precautions against its natural relaxation? You, the people of the West, who have manufactured this abnormality... can you put yourself into the position of the peoples who seem to have been doomed to an eternal damnation of their own humanity, who not only must suffer continual curtailment of

their manhood, but even raise their voices in paeans of praise for the benignity of a mechanical apparatus in its interminable parody of providence?"

We have quoted what the author has to say about the British rule in India because it touches us most nearly. But only a very small part of the book is devoted to this subject. The book deals generally with this phenomenon of European nationalism, and to the eyes of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, in this bitter mood, the European Nation is no less abominable in Europe than in Asia. We say "in his bitter mood" for we do not think the violence of parts of this book characteristic of him. His book is not altogether one-sided: it has qualifications and admissions. Thus he says that he has "deep love and respect for the British race as human beings;" it is only for the British Nation and for government by the Nation that he feels this horror as for an unclean thing. And he never hesitates to tell his own countrymen and the Japanese what in his opinion the East has to learn from the West, and he speaks with enthusiasm of the gifts which Europe has given and still might give to Asia. But we could have wished that, in view of the interest and importance of some of his views, he had shown some comprehension of what Nationalism, to an enlightened European Nationalist, really means.

20 September, 1917

THE GLASGOW HERALD

p7c3(D)

### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

**"My Reminiscences," 7s. 6d. net. - "Personality," Lectures Delivered in America, 5s. net. - "Nationalism," 4s. 6d. net. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan)**

The key word to these three volumes, and indeed to all Tagore's work, is freedom, or the free development of personality; their inspiration is that of all our greatest modern poets and thinkers, the brotherhood of man. All systems that create classes or castes, as in India, or nations, as the West, are non-spiritual, for they divide, not unite, men, and out of this division proceed all organised strikes

and wars. Old barbaric conquerors passed over a land with all the glittering array of war, and were an evil when could be survived, but in the modern world the perfection of system has reduced even the conquerors to slavery, and trade unions, political parties, and peoples are moved by the touching of a button.

The *Reminiscences* are a free-and easy autobiography. Beginning with the poet's own schooldays under an iron system, the boy being brought up entirely by the servants, who treated their charges harshly because they were not their own, before the end we find Tagore running his own school and seeking to encourage self-development on lines which aimed at moral, not utilitarian, success. The soulless barrack masses which we in Europe call schools he condemns as destructive of all sense of beauty and individuality, for the poet dislikes nothing so much as mass-drill. This objection would not apply of course to music and kinder subjects. The book is the story of his own escape of liberty.

From an early age his father left him free to discover life for himself, and at first he fell under many successive influences in literature, and his history is a story of imitations for his poetry jacked the backbone of worldly reality. But through all one thing was his own: he loved the beauty of the earth, and this ultimately triumphed over the sentimental sorrowings of youth. In his verse too he made an escape from the classical forms, for studying music he found that poetry to be free must move to the beating of the inward music, and that the emotional movement is all in all. So he caught at all wandering melodies of mendicants, snatches of song, and let his own spirit be carried away by their suggestion on the wings of new melody, it would be impossible to give any notion of the book by question. It may best be described as a gallery of little pictures of India, breathing peace and beauty of interiors pervaded by a spirit of search for the happiness of man and of India, of wise old men and eager young men seeking to shape a new world. On all these the poet makes his comment, showing how his books came into being, uttering his criticism of life, weighing up materialism against God, ever seeking to preserve his independence from all systems, yet anxious to keep in touch with his people and to help them on the road of true service to India and the world. It is quite unlike other auto-

biographies, for here all the details are incidents in growth, not in success and, there is no conclusion, any more than there is any conclusion to the life of a tree still growing. It grows, and right growth is the end and purpose.

"Personality" merely discusses at greater length many matters touched on in the *Reminiscences*. Some idea of Tagore's method may be gathered from the attack on the one-sidedness of science. "The stars are unmoved in the plane of the distant, and they are moving in the plane of the near" Elsewhere he says that the grammarian goes right through the poetry to the roots of words. He adds:- "the distant and the near are the keepers of two different sets of facts, but they belong to one truth, which is their master" So a rose leaf through a microscope is not a rose leaf: in the pure infinite it is nothing. All things in space and time are thus seen from a purely personal point of view, and our own mind is the principal element of creation. Our mind is a mirror, but every mirror is different. The book consists of six lectures, on Art, Personality, the Second Birth, My School, Meditation and Woman, all equally stimulating. Especially striking are those on Art and Woman, for art is the witness to man's escape from the mere utilitarian, signalling man's conquest of the world and the flowering of individual lives, while the stability of the world itself is maintained by woman, occupied in preserving, not staying, forming that passive soil of humanity in which all else is rooted, creating love where man seeks power.

In "Nationalism" the author deals with one of the most important and insistent problems of to-day, one which has been forced into prominence by the war. In three lectures he arraigns the West for having established the principle of Nationalism which in its very essence is a negation of the spiritual growth of a people. The West has had great thinkers has noble ideas and ideals, and men prepared to die for these, but the concept "nation" implies a denial of these, for a nation is a political not a social entity, its goal is power, and its root motive jealousy of every other nation. To it every growing nation is an object of fear, and therefore every little nation must be kept little. The people of the nation become slaves within it to the concept, and so can be moved en masse for its aggrandisement. The present war is the inevitable result. He warns Japan, in his second

lecture, against being turned from her inborn love of beauty and her patriotic sense of brotherhood to the Western nationalism and its power-lust: and in his third, addressed to the United States he warns his own India not to be diverted from its path of social and spiritual advance to that of political imitation, and voices his hope in America as being free from political bonds and entanglements and receptive of new ideas. It, like India, is a congeries of peoples, and progress must be internal if humanity is to advance in true living. Nationalism is never disinterested, and only through sympathy of man for man can true freedom come. At present no nation has any spiritual goal. The aim of each is to be the swiftest – but whether is it going? None knows.

27 September, 1917

**THE NEW WITNESS**

p524(W)

#### Section: LIBRARY LIST

**Nationalism: By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 4s. 6d.**

This is the fourth book by Tagore that we have had to review during the last three months, and it caused us a deep groan at its author's inconsiderate industry. But we must admit that this volume has some merits: though we come to bury Caesar we are reluctantly constrained to praise him. The greater part of the book is padding, a mere welter of words but the section entitled "Nationalism in Japan", which is, we imagine, the section first written, contains the gist of what Sir Rabindranath has to say on the subject of nationality. In it he is clear, dignified and even noble, urging the Japanese, the first of the Eastern peoples to adopt Western science, not to let "progress" become a mean and snobbish cult, nor, forgetting their ancient culture, to substitute greed for growth. Tagore's argument, however, is unfortunately nullified by a fundamental misconception of nationality, for the nation is to him only a mechanical organisation for conquest and gain, "all stomach and no heart". Can he not see that exploitation has nothing to do with

national life, but is the offspring of the union between capitalism and cosmopolitan finance? A nation can indeed serve false gods, but where the national spirit is most alive, as in Ireland and Poland, simplicity and the love of the soil endure most vigorously. Machines are incidental, the moral thing essential. A nation is a conscious and united association of men who are prepared to defend their liberties with their lives.

13 October, 1917

**THE SPECTATOR**

p386-387(W)

#### THE NEO-HINDU IN AMERICA AND JAPAN\*

HE was rash generalizer who, travelling in India and watching the grave faces of the poorer castes in the streets, asserted that Indians lack a sense of humour. Sir Rabindranath Tagore, so those who read him in the original assure us, is a humorist as well as a poet, and surely his humorous enjoyment of paradox must have been keen when he delivered the three lectures of which this little book is composed, two in the United States and one in Japan. The quiet ease with which he assumes that his audience knows nothing of Indian history and will placidly accept him as the mouthpiece of India and even the East at large ("the world of Nations"), the general admission (for purpose of argument) that his native Bengal is not a nation (since nations are simply associations of greedy and oppressive Westerns for material ends), his tranquil obliviousness of the quite modern and extremely aggressive nations of the Marathas and the Sikhs – all this plainly shows a delighted enjoyment of mystification which a Talleyrand might have shared.

It is this freakish sense of fun, this enjoyment of the obtuseness of humans who have not the poet's ready command of language, which makes the book eminently worth reading by those who would understand why the educational and admini-

\*Nationalism, By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan & Co. [4s. 6d. net.]

administrative problems of Bengal are the most difficult in all India, problems which should only be entrusted to picked men, to men who are linguists in the best sense of the word, men who can learn the psychology with the language of one of the most interesting people in the modern world.

For Sir Rabindranath is a typical Bengali, in his shrewdness, his remarkable courage and outspokenness, his instinctive tact in "sizing up" the foreigners he meets. He can combine the most charming personal amiability with frank dislike and distrust of the "nations" of which his book is a seemingly ingenuous denunciation, and especially the nation whose dubious privilege it is to administer the affairs of Bengal. He quite evidently enjoys the dexterity with which he tells us his sentiments towards the present rulers of his country.

We went to Bengal as traders, and with no other intention of any sort whatever. But Bengal was so grossly maladministered by the decadent Mogul Empire that trading was no easy matter. Finally the Moguls ceded Bengal to the East India Company. It was long before the Company realized its responsibilities, or tried to do more than administer impartial justice and keep the peace. Even now, the tradition of that evil time weighs heavily on rulers and ruled alike. Bengal is still evasive of control and education, but inertia, by odd assumptions of philosophic or spiritual superiority; in short, by just such whimsical and ingenious arguments as find skilful and at times impressive statement in these characteristically clever lectures.

For examples, what are the Western nations (arbitrarily typified as "the Nation") doing to China? Sir Rabindranath tells his American audience this:-

"It is tightening its financial ropes round her, trying to drag her up on the shore and cut her into pieces, and then go and offer public thanksgiving to God for supporting the one existing evil and shattering the possibility of a new one... declaring itself to be the salt of the earth, the flower of humanity, the blessing of God hurled with all His force upon the naked skull of the world of Nations". The United States, at that time, had not joined the Allies in their struggle against the aggression of the Central Powers. Sir Rabindranath could still say that

"America is destined to justify Western civilization to the East. Europe has lost faith in humanity, and has become distrustful and sickly America, on the other hand, is not pessimistic and blasé. You know, as a people, that there is such a thing as a better and a bet; and that knowledge drives you on. There are habits that are not merely passive but aggressively arrogant," &c., &c., That was said at a time when Mr. Bryan and Mr. Ford were still convinced pacifists. It is still very amusing, and interesting, and yet, in a way, rather pathetic and futile. For none of the Allies assuredly, is more convinced than the great States, of whose friendship we are so justly proud, that the nations whom Sir Rabindranath so dislikes and distrusts are spending their blood and treasure for the ultimate benefit of mankind at large, including even clever, wilful, and lovable Bengal. In Japan, we are told, "some of the newspapers praised my utterances for their poetical qualities, while adding with a leer that it was a poetry of a defeated people. I felt that they were right". As a matter of fact, they were obviously wrong. Bengal has never been defeated, because Bengal has never fought as the Marathas and the Sikhs and the Nepalese fought. She has accepted foreign rule. Time after time, *capta ferum victorem cepit*. She absorbed and assimilated all her invaders, among them the ancestors of Sir Rabindranath himself. The Englishman is not assimilated or absorbed. He goes to Bengal to trade or administer, and if he does not leave his bones in an Indian cemetery, returns to what he fondly calls Home. He is not there by any choice of his own. His first coming was welcomed as a change from the gross oppression and incapacity of the later Muslim rulers. But he has stayed a long time, and Bengal grows vaguely impatient.

What remedy have we to offer? We see the educated India is vastly better than it was even so late as in Macaulay's time. Neo-Hinduism and mystical poetry are better than the crude Tantric beliefs that still alas! survive. We are willing to accept Hinduism as it now is as the basis for civilization to be shared on equal terms with the rest of the Empire. We are making experiments (tentative and cautious enough, perhaps) in that direction. But we do not seem to much help, somehow, from Sir Rabindranath and his like. They dislike "the Nation" so much

that they will even proclaim themselves "a No-Nation".

And yet what a pity that a race so gifted and so attractive rejects offers which, if they are cautious and limited, are perfectly sincere and, in intention, even generous! There was a time when the generation of Macaulay could speak contemptuously of the Bengali as effeminate, insincere, and immoral. That is not the way in which, for instance, Mr. C.F. Andrews in his *Renaissance in India*, speaks of his Bengali friends. He recognizes, and many others with him, the charm of manner, the extraordinary literary faculty, the quick and lively intelligence of cultivated Bengalis.

But their political philosophy remains destructively critical. Bengal sulks, and is ready to flirt with China, Japan, America, without any very clear idea of what is to result from these flirtations. Perhaps she has not been well handled by the somewhat stolid Britons who have been sent to manage her worldly affairs, and she takes her revenge by calling them stupid and unimaginative. But we must not forget that Calcutta, after all, is a great cosmopolitan city, the busiest port in Asia, too busy to pay much attention to whimsical political speculations. There are Bengalis (we are too apt to forget their gallantry) who have served the Sirkar faithfully and given their lives in helping to put down anarchical crime. There is a growing body of Bengali scholars who are working patiently and wisely on Western lines at the history of their country, its language and literature. There is, for instance, Professor Rakhaldas Banerji, who has just published in the vernacular an admirable and learned history of Bengal. And there are many others.

We need not perhaps take too serious a view of a poet's whimsical and partly humorous incursion into a field with which he is not familiar. Perhaps these lectures are only the Eastern counterpart of a *Sentimental Journey*, the half-smiling, half-pettish records of the likes and dislikes of a man of genius, whose rather irresponsible expression through a pen which can write two languages with equal ease and felicity.

1 November, 1917

### THE SCOTSMAN

p2c3(D)

**"SACRIFICE AND OTHER PLAYS" By Sir Rabindranath Tagore: 5s. net. London: Macmillan.**

Four short plays in a strangely dignified and musical prose dialogue of simple English are brought together in this volume. That which gives its title to the volume is in one act, like two others, and the longest, though in two acts, is still a short piece. In one sense, they may be said to be all on the same subject; for the essence of each is some elusive mystical doctrine that charms as it escapes, and teaches something solemn about the inner life. But they have plenty of varied and plain human interest on their more concrete side. One is about an ancient ascetic, whom a woman so influences that he wants to get back to the world, and, indeed, does so. But by the time he seems to have changed the woman's influence into something other than it was at first. Then there are two about fabulous - seeming old kings who conquer everything and everybody, only to find out (again under female guidance) that all their conquests are vanity and delusion. All the pieces have a rare beauty of their own, and a fine ethereal and poetic quality nowhere more uncommon than in English play-books of the twentieth century.

3 November, 1917

### THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

p552(W)

### POETS IN KHAKI AND MUFTI

[Reviews of several books under the above heading including a brief review of *Fruit-gathering*]

...Mysticism, born of the immemorial visions of the East, is the note of a volume called "Fruit-gathering" (Macmillan), by the Indian poet, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. It is a prose-poem - that is, it is written in English prose - whether translated from the Oriental original is not stated. To the matter-of-fact English reader, the work as a whole, with its manifold allusions to Indian legends and

its constant transitions from anecdote to philosophic reflection, may appear vague and its artistic unit difficult to grasp. But it is full of beautiful images and lofty thoughts. A section towards the end evidently refers to the present state of the world: "The cowardice of the weak, the arrogance of the strong, the greed of fat prosperity, the rancour of the wronged, pride of race, and insult to man - has burst God's peace raging in storm". The poet ends on a note of thanksgiving, as one of "the humble who suffer and bear the burden of power... And the morrow is theirs. O Sun, rise upon the bleeding hearts blossoming in flowers of the morning, and the torchlight revelry of pride sunken to ashes".

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7 November, 1917

**THE YORKSHIRE POST**

p3c3(D)

**AN EASTERN VIEW OF  
THE NATIONALITY PROBLEM**

The three lectures which make up the volume on "Nationalism", by Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 4s. 6d. net), must be somewhat disconcerting to the poet's more critical admirers. They deal with "Nationalism in India", and they are rounded off by a really beautiful poem, entitled "The Sunset of the Century". They are written in the simple, eloquent prose of which the poet is a master, but they are not written in that calm, beautiful eloquent prose of which his other writings have taught us to expect in any book from his pen. The passion of the lectures does not move us as does the passion in his poems; it rather repels. At times there is a touch of querulousness about it, when he deals with what is repellent to him in Western ideals, and in the way in which the West treats the East. Then he seems to be ashamed of his own lapse from dignity and equipoise of mind, and to feel that he has been unjust to the West, and thereupon he pens a eulogy of the West and what it has done for the East. The result is a certain lack of unity of spirit which jars upon the reader.

"Nationality" does not mean to Sir Rabindranath Tagore what it means to us. In his mind it is not a matter or fact so much as of organisation. His com-

plaint against all the Western nations is almost precisely that which we make against Germany. We are all, he thinks, tarred with the same brush. "The living bonds of society are breaking up, and giving place to merely mechanical organisation", he says; and, again, "Power has become too abstract - it is a scientific product made in the political laboratory of the nation." The nation, with our author, is an abstract thing, and thus our work of the governing in India "is as little touched by the human hand as possible". So far as this Government of India by the nation goes, he agrees that it is one of the best. Still, in his view, it actually hinders India from acquiring the best that western civilisation has to bestow; and he looks forward to a time when the uplifting of humanity, and not power or moneymaking, will be the ideal - to the dawn of a new era, intact, "when man shall discover his soul in the spiritual unity of all human beings." That is very fine, but a trifle vague. One may sympathise with him to a certain extent in his objection to what he calls Nationalism as being too scientific and mechanical - a dead thing which ought to be living, but it is not clear what he would substitute for it. "What would we do," he asks, in his lecture on "Nationalism in India", "if for any reason England were driven away? We should simply be victim for other nations". We infer, therefore, that while he would like to see India free to shape her own destinies, he would not like to see her connection with the British men, except, perhaps, those who are the friends of every country but their own. At the same time, though his strictures at times seem to us not quiet fair, there is much that he says worthy of our serious thought.

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16 November, 1917

**THE DAILY GRAPHIC**

p11c1(D)

**TAGORE AND DICKENS**

**TOUCHES OF NATURE THAT MAKE SANYASI  
AND SWIVELLER KIN**

Though centuries divide them, there is much in common between Sir Rabindranath Tagore and Omar Khayyam. Not every Western modern can

appreciate this dreamy literature, but those who rejoice in the "Rhubaiyat" will rejoice equally in "Sacrifice and other plays", by Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 5s. net). The first of the collection is "Sanyasi, or the Ascetic", in which we have the venerable philosopher sitting outside his cave and moralising.

The simile between Sir Rabindranath Tagore and Omar Kahyyam is an obvious one. A less obvious, but one equally true, is that between two persons, at first sight most widely dissimilar, the Sanyasi and - Dick Swiveller. Had Dick Swiveller sat outside a cave in the ancient East he would have moralised much in the same vein as the Sanyasi; had the Sanyasi found himself clerk to Sampson Brass, in Bevis Marks he would have befriended the poor little Marchioness just as did Dick Swiveller.

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17 November, 1917

**THE WESTERN DAILY PRESS**

p6c5(D)

### "SACRIFICE"

Yet another volume from the Indian philosopher, poet and playwright, Sir Rabindranath Tagore; "Sacrifice and Other Plays" (London: Macmillan and Co.). Those who have hitherto appreciated the clear beauty and high truth which mark all his work, apparent even in the unaccustomed English tongue, will not be disappointed by this collection of four plays. "Sanyasi: the Ascetic", "Malini", "Sacrifice", and "The King and Queen". Love is the golden thread upon which exalted purpose throughout the setting. "Sacrifice" is the name play: but to many readers "Sanyasi", the first in the list, though simpler in its construction, will appeal the most strongly, perhaps by its simplicity, as the triumph of love over reason, the eternal triumph of all ages.

27 November, 1917

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p3c2(D)

### Section: NEW BOOKS

### LITERATURE IN DRAMA

**'SACRIFICE' AND OTHER PLAYS.** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp.256. 5s. net.

These plays very pertinently raise the question of the function of literature in drama. There is a large and influential body of drama which has now held the stage in England for many generations that aims no literary value at all; dramatic action and situation are its only intentions, and it is not necessary here to consider whether such intention, without fine literary perception, can achieve drama at all - whether it must not always stop short at effective theatricality. But there is another kind of drama that has flourished widely only at two or three brief but wonderful seasons in the theatre, that discards all violence of action for its own sake, and seeks to make its impression by a subtler and finer dramatic movement of which the expression is equally a matter of distinguished and idiomatic speech and of event always directly controlled by character or idea. In reading these plays we feel with admiration that Sir Rabindranath Tagore is finely gifted with the quality that can achieve this kind of drama, and yet the result is always unsatisfactory, and for the reason that the English version is never idiomatic or truly distinguished. The speech is accomplished enough, but it is diluted and without flavour. What merit it has derived from the biblical tradition of English; the writing suggests that the author's native language is still one that survives on a great tradition, and that it is still possible for a fine and individual personality to express itself strictly in that tradition without any loss of force - just as this was possible with English when Milton used it. But the English language today is in a highly sensitive state of experiment which, for all the confusion that may come of it here and there, is really effecting a greater idiomatic change than even that in which Wordsworth was perhaps the chief influence. So that when Sir Rabindranath

Tagore writes in English with the same faith in tradition that he would exercise when writing in his own idiom he is writing in a dead language. All we get is a sense that here are moving dramatic themes that could hardly have attracted a writer who had not a corresponding instinct for a fully flavoured and moving style; so that we may safely suppose that in the originals they achieve what they fail to do in translation. In the plays as we have them here there is a poverty in detail that, far from being redeemed by a governing nobility of which we are always conscious, is cumulative as we read on.

J.D.

1 December, 1917

## THE INQUIRER

p472(W)

### Section: BOOKS AND REVIEWS

#### THE REMINISCENCES OF TAGORE

**MY REMINISCENCES.** By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London, Macmillan & Co. 7s. 6d. net.

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE is a mystic, an oriental mystic. It is safe to say that for those who are impatient with either orientalism or with mysticism he is, and is likely to be, of small estimation. His very merits give offence. He is most desirous to understand not only the East, but also the West. He delights in taking in impressions from the Western nations, and particularly from Great Britain and from the United States of America. But he by no means falls down and worships those nations. Nor does he admire them for the solid reasons for which they are apt to admire themselves. Thus, Tagore is a mystic without being a recluse. His interest in Western civilisation must, in many cases, lose him the sympathy of the Eastern mystics, whilst his mysticism is a distinct hindrance to the warmth of his welcome by many of the British and American writers and readers. If an adjective is applied to him, he may be said to be "elusive." Yet it is possible to be attracted to Tagore, without being a mystic on the one hand or a prosaic scientist on

the other. Perhaps the largest audience which Sir Rabindranath gathers together, either when he speaks or when he writes, is of the type which Dr. S. M. Crothers so delightfully describes in one of his essays in the volume, 'The Gentle Reader':-

"For myself, I like to have a general reception-room in my mind for all sorts of notions with which I desire to keep up only a calling acquaintance. But let them all be welcomed, good, bad and indifferent, in the spacious ante-chamber of my ignorance. But I am not able to invite them into my private apartments, for I am living in a small way in cramped quarters, where there is only room for my own convictions. There are many things that are interesting to hear about which I do not care to investigate. If one is willing to give me the result of his speculations on various esoteric doctrines I am ready to receive them in the spirit in which they are offered, but I should not think of examining them closely; it would be too much like looking a gift-horse in the mouth." So we readily feel interested in any speaker or writer who is simple and sincere; child, peasant, or the man of intellect who makes no preventions to "unmitigated" knowledge, as Dr. Crothers so aptly describes one well-known type. Tagore claims to know "Little more than we do." And yet he shares with us his wisdom gathered from the experience of life, as the courteous Spaniard, when we travel with him, abstains from eating unless he first asks the foreigners to share his food with him. Tagore confessed to a Japanese audience that people who see him with his greybeard and white hair and flowing Indian robe will insist that he is an old man, and give him "the higher seat," and show him all other marks of deference accordingly. But he disclaims any such honours, for he covertly the distinction of child-likeness. "I am childish enough," he says, "to believe in things which the grown-up people of the modern age, with their superior wisdom, have become ashamed to own - and even schoolboys also. That is to say I believe in an ideal life. I believe that, in a little flower, there is a living power hidden in beauty which is more potent than a Maxim gun. I believe that in the birds' notes nature expresses herself with a force which is greater than that revealed in the deafening roar of the cannonade - in fact, in 'the still small voice.'" Yet Tagore is no pacifist. He

tells us that, in his view, the breaking up of old ways is a matter for joy, not sorrow. "In Europe this war, which is robbing so many homes by death, is really the tearing off, on a vast scale, of the wrappings of dead habits of mind which have been cumulating for so many years only to smother the truth of our nation. The currents of life, which had become choked and stagnant, will once more become free to flow in fresh channels."

In both the East and the West, Tagore sees that education might be a great reforming power. But to be effective it must be towards simplicity, not complexity of life. He is glad that he was brought up so that "many a trivial thing was for us (children) a rarity ... what little we got we enjoyed to the utmost; from skin to core nothing was thrown away." He contrasts such training with that of the modern child who "nibbles at only half the things he gets." Many of his educational hints are as suggestive for the West and for the East. Whether home-work for the evening should be required from school-pupils receives at least an interesting comment when Tagore suggests "how fortunate the little birds are that their parents cannot light lamps of an evening. They have their language lessons early in the morning. How gleefully they learn them." "Of course," he adds with the Tagorean humour, "we must not forget that they have not to learn the English language." Those of us who remember the old type of text-book for Shakespeare in English, and for all the Latin and Greek authors, will side with Tagore when he says, "To employ an epic to teach language is like using a sword to shave with – sad for the sword, bad for the chin." As to rewards, Tagore is deprecatory. "There is no harm in making gifts to children, but they should not be rewards. It is not healthy for youngsters to be made self-conscious." In many respects, Tagore is an oriental Rousseau, but with the great difference that religion is throughout in the closest relation to life, for to Tagore religion is not "a fractional thing to be doled out... it is the centre of gravity of life" for man and for child. Tagore, however, runs full tilt against some modern educationists when he argues that children should be introduced to what they understand and what they do not. Tagore's point is: "The child makes his own what he understands, while that

which is beyond leads him on an step forward." Tagore could at any rate call in Charles Lamb on his side, for Lamb approved by turning the child out to browse on the books of a good library. Tagore is quite deliberate, and puts up a fight on the matter. "Children dwell in that prime paradise where men can come to know without fully comprehending each step... If that (method) be barred, though the world's marketing may yet go on as usual, the open sea and the mountain too cease to be possible of access."

Illustrations could equally well be taken from Tagore to show his keen interest in other departments of social life besides education, in art, in politics, in social reform, in women's questions, in literature and above all in religion. In self-revelation, Tagore is an oriental Montaigne. His sketches of his old tutors and teachers are quaint and genially humorous. His description of scenery in his own country and abroad show the effect of his father's taking him to live a few months under the Himalayas. But in a work varied in large shares of the earth, nothing is more remarkable than the revelations of child mind-activity and lovers of children's minds should read this book. It suggests the coming of the time when education more in close contact with physical nature will be advocated by the combined thinkers of East and West. Tagore, on the whole, appeals to the class of "Gentle Readers". He is no self-conscious propagandist. No one need fear that he is endeavouring to convert his reader. In these 'Reminiscences' he is showing whomsoever may care to see them, from his portfolio of recollections, sketches of the mental inward light and colour of the incidents which spontaneously occur to his mind as having enlightened, enriched and intensified his personality. Not altogether unlike H.F. Amiel in his 'Journal In time', in his delicacy and charm of treatment of his inner life, he differs from Amiel, in his joyous, child-like outlook. Tagore is permeated with religious faith. In the background of all the gem-like sketches of incidents in his outward life, illuminated by the disclosure of the inner values of them to himself, much as he reveals, he finally declares: "I have not the power to disclose and display the supreme art with which the Guide of my life is joyfully leading me through all its obstacles, antagonisms

and crookednesses, towards the fulfilment of its innermost meaning."

Very remarkable, on the whole, is the work of the translator of this volume. Tagore apparently left to him great freedom in the presentation of his work written in his vernacular. The result is wonderfully good, though sometimes we are not sure whether the exact wordings is Tagore's or the translator's. But evidently both writer and translator are in fullest sympathy.

**FOSTER WATSON.**

11 December, 1917

**THE NORTHERN ECHO**

p4c4(D)

### **SACRIFICE AND OTHER PLAYS**

The title play in this collection of four plays by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, dedicated "To those heroes who bravely stood for peace when human sacrifice was claimed for Goddess of War", is the protest of the Eastern mind against the bloody demands of the Goddess Mother Kali, and an expression of bewilderment at the clashing of the orders of the goddess with the moral sense of the worshipper. "Oh, it is all in vain. Our bitterest cries wander in emptiness"! The Queen believed in the Goddess and would sacrifice to her; the king decided that "creatures' blood is not the offering for gods"; and against the Brahmin argues that it is within the rights of the king and the peasant alike to maintain truth and righteousness. The play develops the conflict between the parties led by the King and Queen.

The following play describes how the king Vikram and Queen Sumitra strive together concerning the welfare of their people, endangered by the autocracy of the foreign relatives of the Queen, who ruled over the provinces. There is a topical presentation of the fascination which war exercises over some minds. The King, for instance, says: "Peace must follow the war. The time for it not yet come".

"Malini" is the story of a princess who, realising that she is one with the life of the world, determines, in spite of her parents' protestations, to leave

her high estate and identify herself with the poor. "Sanyasi", the fourth play, relates the history of an ascetic's relations with a devoted disciple.

The book is extraordinarily able, though English readers deeply interested in it will feel that an understanding of the original is necessary to full appreciation of its form and meaning. (Macmillan, 5s. net)

19 December, 1917

**THE YORKSHIRE POST**

p4c4(D)

### **Section : BOOKS TO READ AND BOOKS TO USE**

"Sacrifice" is the title which Sir Rabindranath Tagore has bestowed upon his latest volume (Macmillan, 5s. net). It is the title, also, of one of the four plays which the volume contains. All four are tragedies, or at least end on the tragic note, and are full of that mystical beauty characteristic of the author. Three of the plays are one-act pieces; the fourth is in two. There is little of what a stage manager would call "action" in them. The drama lies in the conflict of wills, and the changing mind and disposition of the actors. The first shows us a Sanyasi who has renounced the world, but is suddenly recalled to it by a girl's smile. He realises, when he is too late, that God is most surely to be found in the natural duties and joys and sorrows of our common humanity. The title piece is a really noble drama on the world-wide theme of the struggle between progressiveness and conservatism in religion. A king denies that the goddess Kabi [sic] demands sacrifices that require the shedding of blood, and forbids them, His Queen wants to offer such sacrifices because she wants Kabi [sic] to give her a child. The priest of Kabi [sic] is horror-struck at the King's profanity. Out of that simple motif the poet gives us a drama tense and thrilling, ending in the self-immolation of the priest's favourite pupil, and the loss of faith on the part of the priest himself in the goddess he has served too well. It would be interesting to see how the plays would go on the stage. Some of our amateur

dramatic societies have opportunity here ready to their hand to enter a real service to lovers of literature.

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27 December, 1917

**WESTERN MAIL**

p3c6(D)

#### **FOUR PLAYS BY TAGORE**

To the third drama in this book of his plays Sir Rabindranath Tagore assigns the place of importance, for it is the one which gives the title to his latest collection "Sacrifice and Other Plays" (Macmillan and Co, London; 5s. net). Though the misc-en-scene is laid in the East, its teaching is appropriate for East and West. But thinly veiled are the satire and the irony of it. There is a mood in "Sacrifice" and each of the three others, particularly in "The King and Queen", that is more

typical of Russian literature than of Tagore. Even in the wryness of the bitterness of life the artist is not banished. The quality of phrase, the sheer beauty of words – for these now Tagore's very name is synonym – they are there, though the joyousness, the lift of life's rhythm, and the happiness in his other works, with which the young of heart were delighted, are absent. And so the very mature, the cynic even, will take pleasure in this collection of four plays, where life for many persons is depicted awry, where the smallness of human beings is apparent, and where the so-called treasures for which they strive seem pitifully trifling.

One hint alone of a recreation from the ashes of sadness and tragedy is given, and that occurs at the end of "Sacrifice", unlike the conclusions of "Sanyasi", "Malini", and "The King and Queen". Because of the minor key of life in which this unusual and fine series is pitched, no collection of Tagore's works, illustrative of artist, will be complete without it.

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1918

2 January, 1918

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p6c3(D)

## **INDIA AND THE EMPIRE**

### **MRS. BESANT'S PLEA FOR A TIE OF LOVE**

CALCUTTA, WEDNESDAY.

The National Congress met here to-day. There was an enthusiastic gathering, exceeding all records, four thousand delegates from all the provinces attending. The vast Pandal was crowded to suffocation, the visitors including four hundred Indian ladies and everyone paid substantial entrance fees to participate in what the speakers emphasised as an epoch - making moment in the history of India.

There was suppressed excitement, broken by cheering, on the arrival of the principal Indian leaders, Mrs. Besant, Sir Rabindranath Tagore and Surendranath Banerjee sharing the honours until, in the middle of the proceedings Mr. Tilak, at the head of four hundred gaiety turbaned delegates from a belated train journey from Bombay, marched into the enclosure, when the excitement and shouting reached its climax. It was checked quickly, however to hear Sir Rabindranath Tagore attentively read a specially composed ode, and Mr. Surendranath Banerjee cordially proposed Mrs. Besant to the chair, which was carried with acclamation. The silver-haired lady, amidst great cheering, mounted the rostrum and delivered a lengthy presidential address, supporting the National Congress and the Moslem League, and reform upon Mrs. Besant's own home rule lines.

The prominent note throughout the speech was that the tie between India and England, which was now force, should be love, but that a tie of love was impossible until India was a free, willing partner in the Empire and not a dependency.

13 February, 1918

**THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH**

p246(W)

### **"Sacrifice"**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has no equal in ability to interest the West in the East. Last Saturday, at King George's Hall, Y.M.C.A., Tottenham Court Road, the Indian Art and Dramatic Society gave a very successful presentation of "Sacrifice," the name-play of one of the most recent of his artistic creations to be issued in English by Macmillan. In dramatic power this play marks an advance on "Chitra," which has been staged more than once under the auspices of the Union of the East and the West. Taking as his material the historic attempt of King Govinda to put a stop to Kali, with the simplicity of an Irish play at the Abbey Theatre, Tagore presents to us, in a guise of ten players, the eternal conflict between the awful, apparently senseless, cruelty of the universe, personified in the goddess Kali, and the love and mercy that cry out in the human heart. Edyth Goodall as the boy Jaising, servant in Kali's temple, Norman V. Norman as the priest Raghupati, Barbara Everest as the Queen, and Mr. H. K. Ayliff as the King Govinda, each helped in their general roles to make the performance a memorable one.

28 March, 1918

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

(Special Supplement on INDIA)

p37 and p38

[p37]

## **THE MEETING OF THE EAST AND THE WEST**

**By Sir Rabindranath Tagore**

FOR over a century and a half India has borne a foreign rule which is Western. Whether she has been benefited by it, whether her arts and industries have made progress, her wealth increased, and her opportunities of self-government multiplied, are

a matter of controversy which is of very little material interest to the present generation of our countrymen, as it cannot change facts. Even from the point of view of historical curiosity it has a very imperfect value, for we are not allowed to remember all facts except in strict privacy. So I am not going to enter into any discussion which is sure to lead to an unsatisfactory conclusion or consequences.

But one thing about which there has been no attempt at concealment or difference of opinion is that East and the West have remained far apart even after these years of relationship. When two different peoples have to deal with each other and yet without forming any true bond of union, it is sure to become a burden, whatever benefit may accrue from it. And

we say that we suffer from the dead weight of mutual alienation we do not mean any adverse criticism of the motive or the system of government, for the problem is vast and it affects all mankind. It inspires in our minds awe verging upon despair when we come to think that all the world has been bared open to a civilisation which has not the spiritual power in it to unite, but which can only exploit and destroy and domineer, and can make even its benefits an imposition from outside while claiming its price in loyalty of heart.

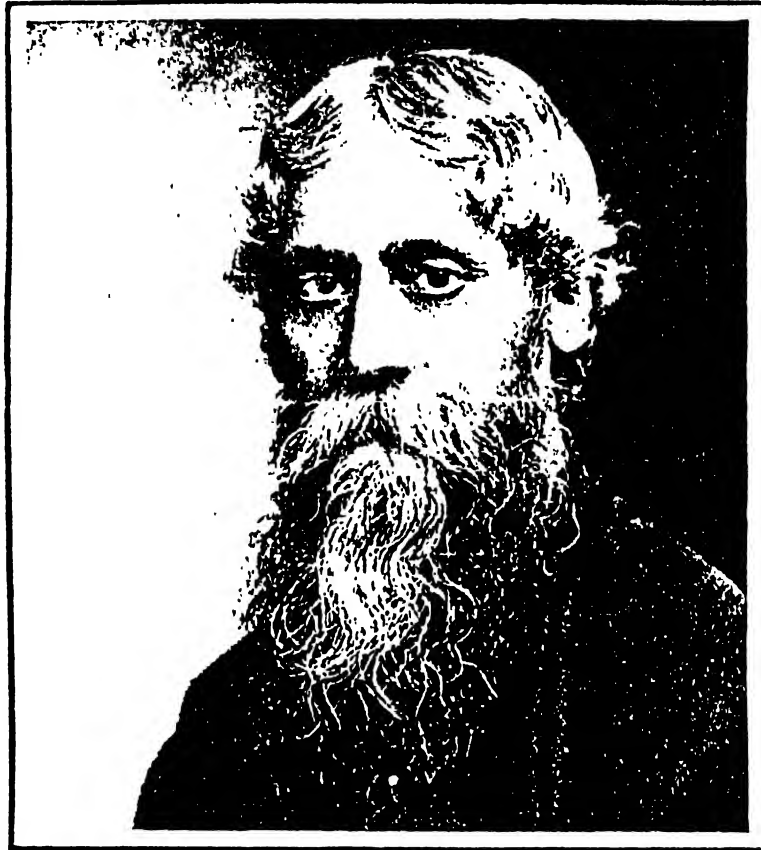
Therefore it must be admitted that this civilisation, while it abounds in the riches of mind, lacks in a great measure the one truth which is of the highest importance to all humanity, the truth which man in the dimmest dawn of his history felt, how-

ever vaguely it might be. This is why, when things go against them, the peoples brought up in the spirit of modern culture furiously seek for some change in organisation and system, as if the human world were a mere intellectual game of chess where winning and losing depended upon the placing of pawns. They forget that for a man winning a game may be the greatest of his losses.

Men began their career of history with a faith in a Personal Being in

relation to whom they had their unity among themselves. This was no mere belief in ghost but in the deeper reality of their oneness which is the basis of their moral ideals. This was the one great comprehension of truth which gave life and light to all the best creative energies of man, making us feel the touch of the infinite in our personality.

Naturally the consciousness of unity had its beginning in the limited area of race – the race which was the seed-plot of all human ideals. And therefore at first men had their conception of God as a



[Kilbott and Fry]

Fig. 27 *The Manchester Guardian*  
28 March 1918, p37

## POEMS.

## I

Our voyage is begun, Captain,  
 we bow to Thee!  
 The storm howls and the waves are wicked and wild  
 but, we sail on.  
 The menace of danger waits in the way  
 to yield to Thee its offerings of pain,  
 and a voice in the heart of the tempest cries,  
 "Come to conquer fear!"  
 Let us not linger to look back for the laggards  
 or bournish the quickening hours  
 with dread and doubt  
 For Thy time is our time and Thy burden is our own  
 and life and death are but Thy breath  
 playing upon the eternal sea of Life  
 Let us not wear our hearts away in picking small help  
 and taking slow count of friends,  
 let us know more than all else that Thou art with us  
 and we are Thine for ever

## II.

Thy kindred shall forsake thee  
 and thy fringing of hope be dead in the dust,  
 yet despair not  
 The gloom of night shall frown upon thy road  
 and thy light fail thee again and again,  
 yet despair not.  
 Even birds and beasts will gather round thee  
 to hear thy voice  
 while men of thine own house remain unmoved,  
 yet despair not.  
 The gate is shut in silent menace to turn thee back,  
 knock and knock, it may never open at all,  
 yet despair not.

## III.

Speak to me, my friend, of Him and say that  
 He has whispered to thee  
 in the central hush of the storm and in the depth of  
 the peace where life puts on its armour in silence.  
 Say that thy utmost want is of Him  
 and that He ever seeketh thy straying heart  
 through the tangle of paths.  
 Shrink not to call His name in the crowd,  
 for we need to turn our eyes to the heart of things  
 to see the vision of Truth and Love building  
 the world anew with its wreckage.  
 Speak to me, my friend, of Him  
 and make it simple for me to feel that He is

## IV.

There sounded a voice in the ancient forest-shade of India proclaiming the presence  
 of a soul in the burning flame, in the flowing water in the breathing life of all creatures,  
 in the undying spirit of Man. Those men who awoke in the world's early surprise of  
 light were free and strong and fearless, crossing the barriers of things in joy and meeting  
 the One in the heart of the All.

The time is loud to-day and crowded, the wealth tinged crimson with the blood of the  
 poor and mind scattered in the wilderness of revolving wheels while the iron demon  
 claims man's soul for its daily food. Come, brave spirits, who can walk unashamed in  
 the path of simple fullness before the huge avengence of dead things

Don your white robe, my brothers, and in quiet strength live your life of inner peace.  
 Let your best wealth grow unseen in the heart of your rich leanne, and let it crown your  
 forehead with a serene light of joy. Do not bend your knees to the power bloated with  
 grossness, but enthrone your soul upon the freedom of the restrained self

Let me lay my heart at the feet of those who have sung that Thou art dearer to them  
 than their wealth and children and truer to them than their own selves. Let me find  
 out that large life of love and strong faith, that perfect flow of moments into the gladness  
 of Thy presence which they had who breathed in the peace of fulfilment in every breath  
 they drew.

Rabindranath Tagore.

tribal god which restricted their moral obligation within the bounds of their own people.

The first Aryan immigrants came to India with their tribal gods and special ceremonials, and their conflict with the original inhabitants of India seemed to have no prospect of termination. In the midst of this struggle the conception of a universal soul, the spiritual bond of unity in all creatures, took its birth in the better minds of the time. This heralded a change of heart, and along with it a true basis of reconciliation.

During the Mohammedan conquest of India, behind the political turmoil, our inner struggle was spiritual. Like Asoka of the Buddhist age, Akbar also had his vision of spiritual unity. A succession of great men of those centuries, both Hindu saints and Mohammedan sufis, was engaged in building a kingdom of souls over which ruled the one God who was the God of Mohammedans as well as Hindus.

In India this striving after spiritual realisation still shows activity. And I feel sure that the most important event of modern India has been the birth and life-work of Rammohan Ray, for it is a matter of the greatest urgency that the East and the West should meet and unite in hearts. Through Rammohan Ray was given the first true response of India when the West knocked at her door. He found the basis of our union in our own spiritual inheritance, in faith in the reality of the oneness of man in Brahma.

Other men of intellectual eminence we have seen in our days who have borrowed their lessons from the West. This schooling makes us intensely conscious of the separateness of our people, giving rise to a patriotism fiercely exclusive and contemptuous. This has been the effect of the teaching of the West everywhere in the world. It has roused up a universal spirit of suspicious antipathy. It incites each people to strain all resources for taking advantage of others by force or by cunning. This cult of organised pride and self-seeking, this deliberate falsification of moral perspective in our view of humanity, has also invaded with a new force in men's minds in India. If it does contain any truth along with its falsehood, we must borrow it from others to mend our defect in mental balance. But at the same time I feel sure India is bid to give expression to the truth belonging to her own inner life.

To-day the Western people have come in contact with all races of the world when their moral adjustment has not yet been made true for this tremendous experience, the reality of which they are most fervidly conscious is the reality of the Nation. It has served them up to a certain point, just as some amount of boisterous selfishness, pugnacious and inconsiderate, may serve us in our boyhood, but makes mischief when carried into our adult life of larger social responsibilities. But the time has come at last when the Western peoples are beginning to feel nearer home what the cult of the nation has been to humanity, they who have reaped all its benefits, with a great deal of its cost thrown upon the shoulders of others.

It is natural that they should realise humanity where it is nearest themselves. It increases their sensibility to a very high pitch, within a narrow range, keeping their conscience inactive where it is apt to be uncomfortable.

But when we forget truth for our own convenience, truth does not forget us. Up to a certain limit she tolerates neglect, but she is sure to put in her appearance, to exact her dues with full arrears, on an occasion which we grumble at as inappropriate and at a provocation which seems trivial. This makes us feel the keen sense of the injustice of Providence, as does the rich man of questionable history, whose time-honoured wealth has attained the decency of respectability, if he is suddenly threatened with an exposure.

We have observed that when the West is visited by a sudden calamity she cannot understand why it should happen at all in God's world. The question has never occurred to her, with any degree of intensity, why people in other parts of the world should suffer. But she has to know that humanity is a truth which nobody can mutilate and yet escape its hurt himself. Modern civilisation has to be judged not by its balance-sheet of imports and exports, luxuries of rich men, lengths of dreadnoughts, breadth of dependencies, and tightness of grasping diplomacy. In this judgement of history, we from the East are the principal witnesses, who must speak the truth without flinching, however difficult it may be for us and unpleasant for others. Our voice is not the voice of authority, with the power of arms behind it but the voice of suffering

which can only count upon the power of truth to make itself heard.

There was a time when Europe had started on her search for the soul. In spite of all digressions she was certain that man must find his true wealth by becoming true. She knew that the value of his wealth was not merely subjective, but its eternal truth was in a love ever active in man's world. Then came a time when science revealed the greatness of the material universe and violently diverted Europe's attention to gaining things in place of inner perfection. Science has its own great meaning for men. It proves to him that he can bring his reason to co-operate with nature's laws, making them serve the higher ends of humanity; that he can transcend the biological world of natural selection and create his own world of moral purposes by the help of nature's own laws. It is Europe's mission to discover that nature does not stand in the way of our self-realisation; but we must deal with her with truth in order to invest our idealism with reality and make it permanent.

This higher end of science is attained where its help has been requisitioned for the general alleviation of our wants and sufferings, where its gifts are for all men. But it fearfully fails where it supplies means for personal gains and attainment of selfish power. For its temptations are so stupendously great that our moral strength is not only overcome but fights against its own forces under the cover of such high-sounding names as patriotism and nationality. This has made the relationship of human races inhuman, burdening it with repression and restriction where it faces the weak and brandishing it with vengefulness and competition of ferocity where it meets the strong. It has made war and preparation for war the normal condition of all nations, and has polluted diplomacy, the carrier of the political pestilence, with cruelty and dishonourable deception.

Yet those who have trust in human nature cannot but feel certain that the West will come out triumphant and the fruit of the centuries of her endeavour will not be trampled under foot in the mad scrimmage for things which are not of the spirit of man. Feeling the perplexity of the present-day entanglements, she is groping for a better system and a wiser diplomatic arrangement. But she will have to recognise, perhaps at the end of her

series of death-lessons, that it is an intellectual Phariseism to have faith only in building pyramid of systems, that she must realise truth in order to be saved, that continually gathering fuel to feel her desire will only lead to a world-wide incendiarism. One day she will wake up to set a limit to her greed and turbulent pride, and find in compensation that she has an everlasting life.

Europe is great. She has been dowered by her destiny with a location and climate and race combination producing a history rich with strength, beauty, and tradition of freedom. Nature in her soil challenged man to put forth all his forces, never overwhelming his mind into a passivity of fatalism. It imparted in the character of her children the energy and daring which never acknowledge limits to their claims, and also at the same time an intellectual sanity, a restraint in imagination, a sense of proportion in their creative works, and a sense of reality in all their aspirations. They explored the secrets of existence, measured and mastered them; they discovered the principle of unity in nature not through the help of meditation or abstract logic, but by boldly crossing barriers of diversity and peeping behind the screen. They surprised themselves into Nature's great storehouse of powers, and there they had their fill of temptation.

Europe is fully conscious of her greatness, and that itself is the reason why she does not know where her greatness may fail her. There have been periods of history when great races of men forgot their own souls in the pride and enjoyment of their power and possessions. They were not even aware of this lapse, because things and institutions assumed such magnificence that all their attention was drawn outside their true selves. Just as Nature in her aspect of bewildering vastness may have the effect of humiliating man, so also his own accumulation may produce the self-abasement which is spiritual apathy by stimulating all his energy towards his wealth and not his welfare. Through this present war has come the warning to Europe that her things have been getting the better of her truth, and in order to be saved she must find her soul and her God and fulfil her purpose by carrying her ideals into all continents of the earth and not sacrifice them to her greed of money and dominion.

[p38]

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND HIS WORK

By Professor C.H. Hereford

RABINDRANATH Tagore sprang suddenly to fame, in England, early in the present century. He had arrived in London at a crisis of his career, full of tragic memories and of boundless hope. The death of his wife and two children had shattered his Indian home, yet brought to the lonely man a new uprush of inner life. His Indian "Fall of the year" had been succeeded by a spring time of the spirit, and he had set forth to England and America, seeking, as he tells us, "the open road, emancipation of self, and self-realisation in love."

London and New York are hardly the fields to which one turns for eager response to aims like these. Yet many circumstances concurred to favour a reception for Tagore. The literary and intellectual atmosphere here, in and after 1900, was stirred by a variety of influences which made for the welcome of one who brought the promise of a spiritual renaissance and conveyed it in an elusively delicate English style. Maeterlinck had begun to distil his poetry of impassioned silences and mystic quietism from dream-world of old Flanders; Mr. Yeats and Synge and the Irish Players were singing Anglo-Saxon respect for the visionary exaltation of the Celt, and for plays in which almost everything is more important than what is done. Reaction from the robust directness of realism had given a vogue to suggestion, reticence, and symbol. On the ethical side, the cult of Tolstoy and of St. Francis subtly prepared for and coloured the reception of the Indian poet. The spiritual significance of India herself had, moreover, been brought home with new force in recent years, when Coomaraswamy's famous exposition of it at Chicago made the supporters of Indian missions ask, "Is this what we are subscribing to destroy?" and seriously diminished their funds. And Tagore was admirably qualified to become a meeting-point of all these sources of attraction. The poet and the saint, the mystic and the sage, seemed to be blended in his rich yet harmonious personality, and to have left their subtle impress upon a face of rare beauty

and distinction, which itself, seen in a thronged drawing-room or on a platform promised a respite from the agitations of the hour or even the vision of a final and assured peace.

But Tagore's real importance began when the discovery of the Indian poet was found to be no slight step towards the discovery of India herself. The Indian background became luminous behind him. The centre, here, of refined and esoteric coteries was the national singer of Bengal. His songs were on all lips. You heard them at dawn and in the gloaming, in the village street and by the Ganges' side. They were themselves, as with Burns, interwoven with traditional lyric phrase. "Ferryman, will you take me over the river?" A line of an old village chant, overheard in a festival throng, was the germ of a play. A late Secretary of State, travelling in Bengal, stumbled one night upon three men round a fire in a forest, and a boy singing to them. "Whose was the song?" Tagore's. Such fact set a decisive gulf between him and most of his seeming kinsmen of Europe. Much that is for us most arresting and individual in Tagore's work only reflected with a peculiar limpid intensity ideas and ideals which were of the very stuff of the national mind. His lyrics have the ethereal delicacy of Shelley's, but they are addressed to an audience as spontaneously and ardently responsive as that of Burns; and, utterly untouched as they are by the soil of vulgar sentiment, they have not the esoteric accent of the lonely singer. He has moments of glowing, even sensuous appeal:

I hold her hands and press her to my breast. I try to fill my arms with her loveliness, to plunder her sweet smile with kisses, to drink her dark glances with my eyes.

So much Burns might have written. But Tagore goes on:

Ah, but where is it?... I try to grasp the beauty; it eludes me, leaving only the body in my hands... How can the body touch the flower which only the spirit may touch?

There India parts company from Ayrshire, and in a fashion which shows that she was only superficially with her from the first. And it is not difficult to appreciate, even in translation, the intimacy

with which the common life of the Indian people does enter into this poetry, to us so cloistral in its hushed beauty. It is a poetry not of the cloister but of the great church near by, open and familiar to the feet of every wayfarer, and picturesque with all the diversities of calling and of daily toil. No poet has ever been more inveterately pictorial or more fundamentally dramatic than Tagore; images and story are woven into the very texture of his verse. The frigidity of deliberate allegory is never approached, but the pictured life is touched with symbol, and every symbol is picture and alive. A girl drawing water at the well, "the full pitcher poised on her head, the shining brass pot in her hand"; a workman digging clay to make bricks for the kiln; the loosing of mooring of boats at the ferries and landing-places on the great river; the lighting of fragrant lamps and incense in the temple at night-fall, the flinging open of the village doors at dawn; the mud or scorching dust of the highway, the fireflies and glowworms and "silent-winged stars" of dusk; the bright jasmine dancing on the trellis, the black serpent coiled in the brake; buying and selling, laughter and song, at festival and fair - of these elementary sights and sounds of Indian life is spun the woof of this Indian poetry. Tagore touches all these things with delicate, effortless precision; the most resolute realist will not charge him with blurred outlines or the rose-pink of effeminate romance. But beneath these delicate, precise outlines lie strange depths of subtle suggestion wholly foreign to realism; and the same image or scene recurs again and again in different contexts, and touched to different issues, gathering new overtones to thought and feeling without forgoing its original, simple appeal, as a still river surface is half emerged, but never lost, in the changing pageant of its mirrored clouds or stars. This is not in Tagore convention, but the native habit of his lyric speech, fundamentally the same whether he is making love-lays, of "song-offerings" of prayer and praise, or the tenderest of hymns to childhood under "the crescent moon". Few could detect, on sheer internal evidence, a piece from the "Gardener" gone astray in the "Gitanjali", or *vice versa*. But this is the way of all mystics, in the East as in the West; their love melts into their religion, and their religion into their love.

Lyric is probably the kind expression in which

Tagore is most perfectly himself, and most secure from criticism or demur. But this could not satisfy all his poetic and spiritual needs. And this very individual lyric of his, interwoven through and through with suggestions of story and drama, and charged with implicit meditation on the great issues of the visible and invisible world, prophesies of all the other things he was to do, in letters and in life. His prose stories, his drama, his philosophic essays and lectures, and, not least, his nobly planned and devotedly executed work in education have won access for his genius and personality in wider circles; notably in America, whose pragmatic temper the subtle spiritual aroma of his lyrics had been apt to evade. Yet the man was not changed. Even his genius was not so much unfold as applied under new conditions to precisely the same ultimate intent. His apparent versatility had nothing in it of the multifarious accomplishment of the clever man, it sprang rather, one might say, from a rare and perfect singleness of soul which, in complete harmony with itself rang true to every call. No one has ever triumphed more absolutely over our English reluctance to admit a man who has succeeded perfectly in one field to equal honour in another than the author of "The Crescent Moon" and "The King of the Dark Chamber", of the Sadhana Lectures and the "Hungry Stones", of the schools at Calcutta and Bolpur. It was a beautiful but unconscious witness to the unity of his work when Tagore devoted the Nobel prize award to him for his "idealistic" work in letters to the foundation and equipment of a place of training for Indian boyhood in the faith from which his own ideals have sprung. No doubt his work in all its branches traverses in some degree accepted conventions. His drama makes new demands upon the audience, it is built upon new postulates. His educational aims provoke the sarcasm of the Anglo-Indian official, his ideas about the soul distress the "Christian common sense" of the British missionary. "The Post-Office" is a kind of "Pipps Passes" of the East, the dying boy with his eager imagination unlocking the hidden tenderness and insight of a whole neighbourhood, as the girl does with her morning radiance and her unconscious song. "The King of the Dark Chamber" is as original as Maeterlinck's "Les Aveugles", and founded upon a kindred reversal of ordinary values. India, said Sister Nivedita, teaches us to

believe in what Maeterlinck calls "the great active silence". So does this invisible and almost silent King whom foreign ambassadors seek in vain, but whose kingliness makes all his people kings; this stern but transcendent lover whom his wife may not see till she has learnt to love in him not any outward grace but the image of his love mirrored in her heart.

Tagore did not discover the soul of India, but he was the first to reveal it, authentically and decisively, to England; and his was a service of the highest order to both countries. Mr. Kipling's brilliant tales made many aspects of Indian life extraordinarily fascinating to us, but they did not in the least degree disturb our confidence in the historic axiom that the Indians were an inferior race or races whom it was our mission to civilise. Tagore gives us glimpses enough, in his prose stories, of an Indian which can gain from something that we can provide; but he makes clear that the process will not be in the least like pouring water into an empty vessel, and also that the pouring will not be all on one side. He somewhere laments that our wrangling art-criticism has brought "mists and clouds to Bengal where before there was a clear sky". He brushes aside our politics, our philosophy of the State, our economics, and who shall say that there is no blindness here? But neither politician nor economist can afford to look *de haut en bas* on a man who slights these phenomena only because he interprets life with a faith more implicit and logical than Western experience seems to warrant in the power and authority of the human soul, where the sages of his country have for centuries declared, with an audacity unapproached in Western religion, that God is for ever born and re-born, an Eternal Child; and in the divineness of the universe "where the slightest movement would be impossible if the sky were not filled with infinite joy". Fantastic and idle imaginings perhaps, which yet did not prevent a practical Englishman, Sir Thomas Monro, from assessing their cultural value at a high figure when he declared that "if civilisation were to be made an article of commerce between the two countries England would soon be heavily in debt". And among her principal creditors would be Rabindranath Tagore.

18 April, 1918

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT  
p183(W)

### INDIAN TALES

MASHI AND OTHER STORIES. By SIR  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE. (Macmillan, 5s. net.)

The publication of this book proves that Sir Rabindranath Tagore is now a popular author. "Translated from the original Bengali by various writers," the little stories that it contains have, as none will need to be assured, their charm; but, were it not for "Gitanjali," for "*Chitra*", and for "Sadhana," they would scarcely have won paper and cloth and the labour of the press in days when all are as scarce as now. The implication is that the author of them – so few years ago a morsel of epicores! – is now a writer in the fashion.

Well no matter what he puts forth in English, he cannot cloud the memory of the joy that rose from the first readings of "Gitanjali" nor detract from the beauty of *Chitra*. And if the public finds pleasure in "Mashi and other stories," it will have more than the fashion to justify it. These little studies of native life are rich in information on native customs and points of view. We may be satisfied that the characters are natives as seen by a native, not with the vision, necessarily blurred by prejudice or difference, of an Occidental. They have other good qualities as well: Sometimes a grave irony; sometimes what even an Occidental can recognize as good comedy; sometimes a beauty of phrase and image which suggests the earlier books. The best in this last respect in the story of Subha, the dumb girl.

I know not if amid these signs of worldly wealth any one noticed the little girl who, when her work was done, stole away to the waterside, and sat there. But here Nature fulfilled her want of speech, and spoke for her. The murmur of the brook, the voice of the village folk, the songs of the boatmen, the crying of the birds and rustle of trees mingled, and were one with the trembling of her heart. They became one vast wave of sound, which beat upon her restless soul. This murmur and movement of Nature were the dumb girl's language; that speech of the

dark eyes, which the long lashes shaded, was the language of the world about her. From the trees, where the cicadas chirped, to the quiet stars there was nothing but signs and gestures, weeping and sighing. And in the deep mid-noon, when the boatmen and the fisherfolk had gone to their dinner, when the villagers slept, the birds were still, when the ferry-boats were idle, when the great busy world paused in its toil, and became suddenly a lonely, awful giant, then beneath the vast impressive heavens there were only dumb Nature and a dumb girl, sitting very silent – one under the spreading sunlight, the other where a small tree cast its shadow.

Subha's parents palmed her off upon a bridegroom who did not know that she was dumb. When he learned the truth he took "a second wife who could speak"; and what Subha's life thenceforward was like we are left to imagine. More surely than by any detail of unhappiness, the author implies it by his caressing description of her life before marriage, with her friends the cows and her companion, the "idle-fellow" who went fishing, and by the subtle insistence on the relation between this dumb girl and her dumb mother Earth, each of them having, in sound and in silence, her own means of expression. This is the one story in the book which puts the reader into reverie and sets him feeling his way into remote correspondences and dim suggestions.

In Sir Rabindranath Tagore's "Hungry Stones" there is a memorable story, called "The Devotee," concerning, in part, the passion of a guru – a confessor, as we might call it – for his pupil and penitent. In "Mashi" also there is a story of a guru and his passion for a married woman; and the difference between the two gives the measure of a difference between "Mashi" and "Hungry Stones." The earlier volume was full of suggestion, of "mysticism," as we loosely call it. The spiritual adventure, the spiritual strangeness, were constantly revealing themselves behind the incidents. "Mashi" is much more on the surface of life. The tale of the guru is a tale, no more; a tale told for the sake of the incident, not of the illimitable spiritual effect behind the incident; a tale in which the peculiar quality of the writer's mind and spirit is not easy to detect. So, too, with several of the stories that tell of self-sacrifice, of devotion to family, or of pity for

the oppressed. They are well told; the point is always clearly brought out; the unessential is omitted. But the reader who hopes to learn from this volume the distinctive quality of Tagore will be wasting his time.

26 April, 1918

### THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

(Special Supplement on INDIA)

p3c1

### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S STORIES

MASHI AND OTHER STORIES. By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp. V. 223. 5s. net.

These stories, "translated from the original Bengali by various writers", may sometimes seem remote and, to a Western sense, lacking in sharpness of edge. The situations are sufficiently defined. There is in the best examples what may be called a poetical envelope, but in some cases, at least, we miss the middle factor, the illuminating detail which makes for nobility of design. There are times when we are conscious of a largeness of gesture, of a life to which the sunlight, the star, or the silences are accompaniments; but some of the pieces are hardly more than formal or trivial. Compared with the stories of Tchekhov, for instance, this art seems primitive. The society with which it is concerned, though far from the peasant class, is ruled very much by traditions and superstitions, reason is not peremptory nor passion glowing. There is a fundamental humanity, but the people are lotus-eaters. Perhaps "Mashi", which is the longest piece, is the best. It is the pathetic illusion of a sick husband fed with stories of a selfish wife's devotion. At last he is undeceived, but he must suffer to the end the subtle affront of having the illusion pressed upon him. All this is delicately done, and others, such as "The Postmaster", in which a lonely and neglected man leaves a girl alone and neglected, are exquisitely and simply human. "Subha" is the idealisation of a dumb fit, "silent and companionless as noontime", who makes friends, of an intimacy denied to others, with what

we call dumb animals. "The River Stairs" is a characteristic renunciation which is gently ideal: "My Fair Neighbour" is a mild little comedy - or is it a mild little tragedy? - and "The Skeleton" a fine, bizarre piece of irony. Some of the stories might seem melodramatic but that the suavity of the narrative prevails. And perhaps to another reading in another mood some of those which make no deep impression might yield shy beauties.

A.N.M.

22 May, 1918

**THE YORKSHIRE POST**

p3c2(D)

### LOVE AND DEATH

In the tale which gives its title to "Mashi and Other Stories" (Macmillan, 5s. net.), Sir Rabindranath Tagore achieves what is surely one of the highest reaches of pathos in our literature. The volume as a whole has a unity of tone remarkable in a volume of short stories. All are concerned more or less with the ironies of life, and have an acid flavour, and at first suggest a root of bitterness, and even of cynicism, in their author; but closer study suggests that he has written as if he were making a jest of sorrow in order that he may not weep.

The other volume which has just come from this new voluminous author's pen, "Lover's Gift and Crossing" (Macmillan, 5s. net.), is of the type which first won him admirers in this country. It is in two parts, the first of which hooks on to "The Gardener," and the second to "Gitanjali." As poetry, some of it ranks with the finest things he has done, and the book is sure of a warm welcome. The opening poem suggests that Shah Jahan, when he built the Taj Mahal, in memory of his wife, embodied in it his thoughts of her. "The secret whispered in the hush of night to the ear of your love is wrought in the perpetual silence of stone." The poems that follow may be read as an expression of some of the famous ruler's thoughts about his dead love; but the reader can hardly help reading into at least some of them a more personal expression on the part of the poet himself of the joys and longings of his own married life. This, for instance, is too poignant not to be autobiographical:

Bring beauty and order into my forlorn life woman  
as you brought them into my house when you lived  
Sweep away the dusty fragments of the hours, fill the  
empty jars, and mend all neglects. Then open the inner  
door of the shrine, light the candle, and let us meet  
in silence there before our God.

The poems which make up the second part of the volume, "Crossing," contain the thoughts of the poet in his old age as he contemplates the prospect of death. They are brave, noble, consoling thoughts, and they will find an echo in many a heart in these days, when there are few homes which death has not touched. The poem which winds up the series is as fitting a "last word" for the poet as Tennyson's "Sunset and Evening Stars," or Browning's "Epilogue" to "Asolando." It deserves quotation in full:

Comrade of the road,  
Here are my traveller's greetings to thee.  
O Lord of my broken heart, of leave-taking and  
loss,  
of the grey silence of the day-fall,  
My greeting of the ruined house to thee!  
O Light of the new-born morning,  
Sun of the everlasting day,  
My greetings of the undying hope to thee!  
My Guide,  
I am a wayfarer of an endless road,  
My greeting of a wanderer to thee

24 May, 1918

**MONTROSE STANDARD AND ANGUS AND  
MEARNS REGISTER**

p6c1(W)

**LOVER'S GIFT AND CROSSING. By Sir  
Rabindranath Tagore. (London: Macmillan  
& Co.) 5s.**

There must be some magic in the Indian author's writing, for when the end is reached we would fain say nothing, lest the sound of a strident voice should mar the gracious silence. As in

"Crossing" - "Now let me sit in peace and listen to thy words in the soul of my silence." What is said in "Lover's Gift" is like the scent of many flowers floating in and out at an open window. In form it is a prose; in its essence it is poetry, a Bengali version of the Song of Songs, enriched but purified, more spiritually intense while less easily flushed with passion. Love is treated as either a vitalising presence permeating Nature, or as personified in its object, or as entering into and imparting something of itself to the objects and forces of Nature. An intimacy is thereby established between them and the poet, such as we find in no other poetry. On the day, for example, when he brings homage to his love "the blossoming Kadam trees are tempting the passing winds with wine cups of perfume." "In your dark eyes the coming of the rain finds its music, and it is at your door that July waits with jasmynes for your hair in its blue skirt." It is as if Nature were the poet's confidant, and her influences his accomplices, and at other times as if she were so completely identified with humanity that her voices are the expression of human emotion. In an invocation to Spring, we see her ages ago coming down upon the first youth of the earth, when men and women pelted each other with flowerdust in a madness of mirth. Year after year she brings and scatters the same flowers in her path that she brought that earliest April, "Therefore, to-day in their pervading perfume, they breathe the sigh of the days that are now dreams - the clinging sadness of vanished worlds. Your breeze is laden with love-legends that have failed from all human language." In like manner April entered his own life, fluttered with its first love; "Since then the tender timidity of that inexperienced joy comes hidden every year in the early green buds of your lemon flowers; your red rose, carry in their burning silence all that was unutterable in me." No western mind thought a breeze laden with love-legends or a pool's memory of swimming limbs, or a waterfall of dreams. These phrases are not so suggestive of close communion between the poet and Nature as of what we have called the identity of his life and spirit with "the soul that in her lives." This idea of the unity of all life in source and essence goes close to that impression of a complete realisation by the poets of the East of the

omnipresence of God, the actual breathing of the divine spirit in and through Nature, of which evidences occur in other poets than Tagore, although his works are full of it. Down to the twentieth stanza the poem, on web of poetry, appears to have been written by Sir Rabindranath in English, then follow ten stanzas from the Bengali of Devendranath Sen, a posy of about a score from the Bengali of Satyendranath Datta, three called "The Child" from the Bengali of Dwyendralal Roy [Dwijendralal Roy], and the remainder after Satyendranath Datta. The latter has passages of enchanting beauty, but the strain changes bewilderingly from the opening of the champa flower to the birth of love. The same might be said of "Crossing," a poet's song of life and death, of greeting and farewell, wandering with the winds and musical as murmurous waters.

22 August, 1918

#### THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

p394(W)

#### Section : LITERARY

**The Parrot's Training.** By R.N.Tagore with 8 drawings by Abanindranath Tagore 111/2x51/4, Calcutta: Thacker Spink

A brief satire, but a shrewd one, dedicated to Prof. Patrick Geddes, on certain forms of education. The Fundits, the Goldsmith, the makers of text-books, the Raja's nephews all who were concerned in the education of the Raja's parrot, received rewards and honours; and the fault-finder had his ears pulled by the State ear-puller. But the parrot died choked with paper, yet as ignorant as ever. We need not apply the parable. The text is very short; but with eight full pages of quaint and delightful illustrations and the two effective cover designs it makes up a desirable quart.

28 November, 1918

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p584(W)

### **TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY**

#### **TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES**

Sir, - May I add a word to your illuminating and suggestive criticism of Professor Radhakrishnan's book on the "The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore"?

It is only fair to remember that the Professor, though an Indian, is not a Bengali, and that he is explaining the English version of Tagore's works. Again, though he is a Hindu, yet there is a subtle but undeniable difference between the Hinduism of the Deccan and that of Bengal, and especially that "pure and reformed branch" of Bengali Hinduism over which the poet's saintly father presided. This may account for the professor's excusable impatience when sundry Western critics trace Christian influences in Tagore's works. The critics in question may defend themselves in two ways. If their knowledge of their subject is confined to the poet's works in their English dress, they may appeal to the fact that invocations of "Lord", "Master," and &c., inevitably suggest Christian associations. If they know anything of the history of the Brahmo Samaj, their defence is still easier. No one can deny that Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Luther

of this Bengali Reformation, was profoundly influenced by Christian and Unitarian doctrine and example.

It is true that Ram Mohan learnt at Clifton to think out a simpler and purer Hinduism which he conceived to be more in accordance with elementary Hindu ideals, more truly Hindu, than animistic beliefs and practices which, intermixed with vague survivals of Buddhism, then passed for Hinduism in Bengal. That, surely, is no matter for regret on either side. If a study of the life and thought of such a man as Maharshi Devendranath Tagore or Keshub Chundra Sen makes us more frankly Christian, more aware of the accretions which time has added in different countries to primitive Christianity, we should surely be grateful and not impatient. For which reason I heartily hope that another professor (a Bengali this time), Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar, is mistaken in claiming that the reformed Hinduism of Tagore and his like is bound to be absorbed by polytheistic orthodoxy, as other theistic reforms have again and again been absorbed in the past. But it is difficult to write briefly on matters so technical without giving offence on one side or the other. Sir Rabindranath himself has a sense of humour, and him we need not fear to offend.

Your obedient servant,  
J. D. ANDERSON.

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# 1919

19 February, 1919

## THE ERA

p12(W)

### THE UNION OF EAST AND WEST

#### INDIAN PLAYS IN ENGLISH

On Wednesday, February 12th, at the Comedy Theatre, under the auspices of the Union of East and West, whose main object is "to establish a meeting for the East and the West in the field of art, philosophy, literature, music and the drama," the Indian Art and Dramatic Society gave a special performance of two Indian plays.

#### "SAVITRI."

King Aswapati ..... James Carew  
Queen Sheela ..... Rosamund Croudace  
Meera ..... Marjorie Gordon  
Narad ..... Laurence Hanray  
Princess Savitri ..... Sybil Thorndike  
Prince Satyavan ..... Frederic Sargent  
Yama ..... Russell Thorndike

Based on the legend from "The Mahabharata," the adaptation of Kedar Nath Dasgupta is disappointing. With all the text's beautiful thought, with all the dreaminess of the action, even with the strong reminiscence of the Greek Alcestis, there is a constant disturbance by jarring accents of Anglo-Indian political lingo. And Mr. Gupta's arrangement in lyrical quatrains, with their unfortunate rhymes, often entails word-inversions that are exceedingly distressing.

Mr. Sargent and Mr. Thorndike both played splendidly. Indeed, the long-drawn-out final scene was saved from utter dullness by their impressive work. Mr. Hanray, as a hermit, spoke his lines well, and the other parts were in helping hands. One must not forget the prologue of Mr. Henry Ainley, whose return to the stage brought him a great welcome, and whose declamation on this occasion was worthy of his supreme traditions. Miss Lilian Braithwaite, too, spoke a "chorus" interlude mag-

nificently; while Miss Marjorie Gordon, to the accompaniment of Mr. Philip Page, sang atmospheric songs by Rabindranath Tagore, the compositions of Landon Ronald.

The cathedral chant-like "National Hymn for India" (Maddison) was rendered during the interval with great dignity by Mme Arkandy, in absence of Miss Viola Tree.

#### "THE KING AND QUEEN"

King Vikram .. Dennis Nelson Terry  
Queen Sumitra ... Barbara Everest  
Devadatta . . . Russell Thorndike  
Courtier . . . Eric Hiller  
Priest . . . S. M. Pal  
General . . . Edward Cooper  
Shankar . . . Frederic Sargent  
Chandrasen . . . Leonard Courteney  
Revati . . . Lilian Moubrey  
Amaru .. K. S. Sauhta  
Ila . . . Colette O'Neil

This, the first performance in English of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's famous drama (it will be found in "Sacrifice and Other Plays"), came, with its concise rhythmical prose, as an immense relief. The characterisation is very strong, and the plot works smoothly and dramatically to its thrilling end. The part of vacillating King Vikram, surely the Indian Hamlet, was finely played indeed; and no less excellent was the work of Miss Everest as Sumitra. Mr. Thorndike had good lines, while all the comparatively minor people gave best possible account.

Both plays, the one produced by the adaptor and the other by Mr. Miles Malleon, were given in front of a beautiful setting of black curtains, against which the superb garments of the East were in violent, but most effective, contrast. I raise should be especially given to Miss Phyllis Hiller for her work in the staging of the "The King and the Queen."

20 February, 1919

## THE STAGE

p16(W)

### The Comedy

#### INDIAN MATINEE

#### THE KING AND THE QUEEN

On Wednesday afternoon, February 12, 1919, the Indian Art and Dramatic Society presented here, for the first time in English, a play, in two acts, by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, entitled:-

#### The King and Queen

Vikram (King)	Mr Dennis Nelson Terry
Attendant	Miss Phyllis McTavish
Sumitra (Queen)	Miss Barbara Everest
Devadatta	Mr Russell Thorndike
Courtier	Mr Eric Hiller
Priest	Mr S M Pal
General	Mr Edward Cooper
Shankar	Mr. Frederic Sargent
Chandrasen	Mr Leonard Courteny
Revati	Miss Lilian Mobery
Amaru	Mr K S Sauhta
Ila	Miss Colette O'Niel

Indian music by Maheboob Khan and Musraf Khan.

Produced by Mr Miles Malleison.

Under the auspices of the Union of East and West, many performances have been arranged by the Indian Art and Dramatic Society, with Mr. Kedar Nath Das Gupta as zealous hon. organiser; and one of the most ambitious and not the least successful of these was that given at a matinee at the Comedy, on Wednesday last week, when two Indian plays were presented with the aid of a number of distinguished British artists. The first of these was Savitri, or, Love conquers Death, which has been seen fairly often before, and the second was Sir Rabindranath Tagore's *The King and the Queen*, now played for the first time in English, though it has already been read by many people in the volume of Tagore's works containing *Sacrifice* and other plays, published by Macmillan's. As played on February 12, when it was produced by Mr. Miles

Mallison, and the title roles of Vikram and Sumitra were filled very ably by Mr. Dennis Nelson-Terry and Miss Barbara Everest, this moving tragedy, the picturesque and florid dialogue of which includes many purple passages of its eminent author's imagining, gave one the impression of over-violent transitions and of motives insufficiently clear and cogent. Briefly, the plot deals with the extraordinary rapid and complete transformation of King Vikram from an indolent and uxorious "Roi Fainéant" into a bloodthirsty warrior and misogynist. This resulted from his wife, Sumitra, a Kashmir Princess, preferring to perform some of Vikram's grossly neglected duties in matters of government rather than to submit herself at all hours to his love-making. Meanwhile, the populace are being starved and oppressed by her rapacious kinsmen from Kashmir, and as Sumitra apparently thinks the King incapable of setting things right she leaves the palace and betakes herself, in "mate attire," to seek the aid of her brother Kumarsen, the ruler of Kashmir.

From this point onwards Tagore puzzles or disappoints us, for the Queen fades away into becoming merely a weak and love-craving woman, instead of developing into a Joan of Arc, a Queen Elizabeth, or a Maria Theresa, as might almost have been expected, and the King, to obtain revenge for the insult thus offered him, takes up arms, and wages war, not against Sumitra's grasping relations, but against her brother Kumarsen. After the latter has been defeated, and is hiding as a hunted fugitive from his conqueror, now exulting in war for its own sake, and bidding his soldiers "keep a sharp lookout, not for the enemies, but for women," the interest is shifted in a most unexpected manner. Vikram is offered by Amaru, a local Chieftan, the latter's daughter Ila, as his handmaid; but the girl remains true to Kumarsen, who had been her lover, and softens Vikram relents, and promises to spare Kumarsen, for whose marriage to Ila suitable preparations are to be made. But anon Sumitra, in her new role of semi-suppliant, comes to Vikram's tent, bearing, in gruesome Eastern fashion, the wrapped-up head of her brother, who had taken in own life rather than fall into the hands of his conqueror, escaped apparently of war and revenge at this unsatisfactorily inconclusive end of a strange play. Miss Everest, as the Queen, indicated the earlier traits of moral strength in admirably earnest style, and Mr. D. Nelson-Terry,

making a picturesque figure of the young King, gave powerful effect to the expression of the remarkable contrasts in Vikram's moods and feelings. His commanding and successful performance had good support, notably from Miss Colette O'Niel, quite intense in Ila's pleadings, and from Mr. Russell Thorndike, as the King's Brahmin friend Devadatta, a serio-comic role. Notable also was Mr. Frederic Sargent, as Kumarsen's faithful servant Shankar.

### Savitri

In the preceding performance of Savitri (this dramatisation of a legend from The Mahabharata bearing witness again to the adapting and production work of Mr. Das Gupta) notable and unfamiliar points were the admirable elocution, beautiful alike as regards cadence, inflections of voice, and just emphasis, of Mr. Henry Ainley and the red-robed Miss Lilian Braithwaite, who had to speak, respectively, the explanatory Prologue and the further-elucidatory Interlude, both couched in poetic prose, and also the artistic singing by Miss Marjorie Gordon, skilfully accompanied by Mr. Philip Page, of a couple of lyrics by Tagore, set to graceful and charming music by Landon Ronald. Miss Gordon was appearing in the role of Meera, friend to the devoted and unselfish Savitri, who by her earnest supplications and persistent entreaties induces the grim Yama (Death) to restore to life her fate-doomed young husband, Satyavan. This character was sustained well by Mr. F. Sargent, and successful reappearances were made by Miss Sybil Thorndike, again a most sympathetic and gently emotional representative of the time-honoured heroin, named after the Goddess who had saved her parents from the reproach of childlessness, and by Mr. Russell Thorndike, an impressive figure as death, with heavy golden crown and scarlet robe. Savitri's father and mother, the King and Queen of Madra, were played suitably by Mr. James Carew and Miss Rosamund Croudace, and Mr. Lawrence Hanray appeared as that prophate of evil, the hermit Narad. During the afternoon Adela Maddison's setting of the National Hymn for India was rendered tastefully by Mme Katharine Arkandy, in place of Miss Viola Tree, unavoidably detained in Paris. The orchestra at this well-attended Indian matinee was under the direction of Mr. F. Edbrooke.

17 May, 1919

### THE SPECTATOR

p635(W)

### RABINDRANATH AND ABANINDRANATH\*

It was a happy thought to republish the two most popular collections of poems by the most famous Bengali authors with illustrations by four leaders of the new school of Bengali painters. New Bengali art is beyond the experience of other parts of India, for barely thirty years ago, art in Bengal was confined to crude woodcuts, grotesque clay idols clad in tinsel and brightly coloured tissue-paper, and the remarkable clay models of Nuddea. Yet even then, even before Mr. Havell gave a new and surprisingly sympathetic and indigenous impulse to the invention and expression of his Bengali pupils, those who best knew Bengal shrewdly guessed that the most literary and linguistically gifted race in India lacked rather opportunity and technique than capacity and taste.

It may be objected that theirs is a hybrid art. But the same may be said of all the art, literary or other, that has survived into our time, save perhaps the surprising drawings of the Cavemen. Rather should we rejoice that the contemporary renaissance of art, letters and learning in Bengal owes, and to some extent consciously and gratefully owes origins to Western example and encouragement. Rabindranath himself is Indian, but with a difference which is partly due to his personal genius, partly to his racial temperament as a Bengali, partly to his English education. Something of this mixed origin we may trace in the illustrations of his four artists, two of them members of his own remarkable family. The two most distinguished and original of these, Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose, hardly show to such advantage in the reduced reproductions of their work now published as in the charming colour prints by Japanese engraver published some six years ago by the India Society. We find nothing quite so beautiful as the former's ex-

\**Gitanjali and Fruit-gathering* By Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Illustrated by Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Kar, Abanindranath Tagore and Nabindranath Tagore. London Macmillan. (10s.net.)

quisite picture of "Sati," or the latter's moving and glowing representation of Savitri interceding with the saffron-robed and gravely lovely God of Death.

We have, nevertheless, a singularly interesting interpretation of the Bengali poet's imagination by gifted artist of his own race. To those who know and love rustic scenery of Bengal, Abanindranath Tagore's depictions of dawn and dusk, as in the suggestive and subtle little picture entitled "The Bird of the Morning Songs," will rouse a not unhappy nostalgia. Those who know the poet's prose and verse best will remember that much of his work has been inspired by the picturesque variety of his native town of Calcutta, and will regret that the illustrators have made no attempt to represent its streets and alleys in sunshine and storm. Perhaps Bengali art has not yet awakened the pictorial possibilities of the great cosmopolitan city, whose busy and variegated life plays so conspicuous a part in the contemporary novels of such men as Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and Charu Chandra Mukherji, to mention only two of a remarkable school of experimenters in fiction. But Bengali art thrives and grows apace, and this little book has its historical value as marking a stage of singular interest, accomplishment, and unmistakable promise. Abanindranath Tagore's little water-colour at p.126 is delightful, and piping cowherd lad recalls many pleasant passages in old poets in praise of the divine Govinda.

Altogether, a charming and welcome addition to the now familiar *Gitanjali* and *Fruit-gathering*.

29 May, 1919

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p289(W)

### **IDOLATRY, OLD AND NEW**

**THE HOME AND THE WORLD. By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Translated by SURENDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan. 6s. net.)**

This book is a novel; we have never before read a novel about Hindus by a Hindu, so that we cannot be sure how far the novelty of treatment and subjects heightens its interest for us. Further, it is about the Swadeshi or nationalist movement in India

and its effect on a rajah and his wife; and this movement must interest every English reader who is interested in any thing beyond flappers or the parish pump. But a bad writer might have made even this material dull; Sir Rabindranath Tagore has made a work of art out of it. Only at the end does the movement begin to swamp the characters, before that we see the movement in the characters, and, if the author is not fair of it, if his nationalist leader is not representative, he can plead that he is dealing with particular people - that he is an artist, not a politician.

The story is told by three different characters, the Rajah, who is really what we should call a country gentleman; his wife, Bimala; and the nationalist leader Sandip Babu. It is a method used by Wilkie Collins, but Sir Rabindranath employs it in his own way and with great skill, not merely to advance the plot, but to express different points of view. All the three characters become familiar to us at once because of the subtlety with which they are drawn, they are not Hindus merely, but human beings; it is only their world of circumstance and ideas that is strange to us. Nikhil, the Rajah, is a gentleman and a patriot, more philosophic and religious than any Englishman of his standing would be, more patient and detached. He is in fact finer than a European, and his European education has only given him a greater power of detachment. His wife Bimala, whom he treats as a European would treat his wife, and who also can express herself with European self-consciousness, is a wonderful hybrid, half-passion, half thought, half a worshipper of idols by instinct, half a woman of the world. In fact they are all hybrids, and the strangest and most interesting of all is the nationalist leader Sandip. He is a Hindu Nietzschean - and we did not know that such people existed. He worships power, and above all power in himself; and he helps us to see more clearly why the Germans have worshipped power in Germany and in themselves, why the teaching of Nietzsche has cast such a spell over them. Sandip, like the Germans, says that his people have been on the wrong track all through history, they have been visionaries, humble and meek because they have cared nothing for the things of this world. Events have proved that they are mistaken; they have made the worst of both worlds.

Let moral ideals remain merely for those poor anaemic creatures of starved desire whose grasp is weak. Those who can desire with all their soul and enjoy with all their heart, those who have no hesitation or scruple, it is they who are the anointed of Providence ... Nature surrenders herself but only to the robber. For she delights in this forceful desire, this forceful abduction ... Ashamed? No, I am never ashamed! I ask for whatever I want, and I do not always wait to ask before I take it.

— and so on. Nietzsche is never mentioned, but it is his doctrine — a doctrine arising naturally in a people used to subjection and tired of it, anxious to be successful in the world, but without experience of it.

Sandip glorifies ruthlessness both in his country and in himself; he becomes for himself the mouthpiece and representative of his country; very conveniently their interests are to him identical. He does not say to himself that he is a swindler and a would-be adulterer; he says that both he and his country must behave without scruple if they are to get their desires, which are the same. He is to himself a superman, on what grounds, except that he is a good mob orator, we do not discover. European teaching has robbed him of formal belief in his country's gods, but — and here is the great interest of the story — he remains an idolator and a polytheist at heart. It is no longer gods or goddesses that he worships, but instincts and passions, and these he worships entirely for their strength. He inhabits a world of ideas like that of Wagner's Ring, in which an old mythology expresses the conflict of human forces, and in which there can be no harmony, but only a conflict with a survival of the strongest. That is the psychological basis of polytheism, as we see clearly in this book. A harmony is not even desired, so we cannot say that it is despaired of. Nietzsche was instinctively a polytheist, the passions warring with each other being his gods; and in Hindu religion these passions have deified themselves immemorially and are worshipped because they are the strongest things known to man. So Sandip is more profoundly and naturally a Nietzschean than Nietzsche himself. He, like the Germans, worships the passions because really he is afraid of them, because

they are his masters; and he has power because he lives in a world that is ruled by fear. Nikhil puts it clearly in his indictment of the nationalist movement and its terrorism.

The slavery that has entered into our very bones is breaking out, at this opportunity, as ghastly tyranny. You have been so used to submit to domination through fear, you have come to believe that to make others submit is a kind of religion. My fight shall be against this weakness, this atrocious cruelty

The story is of his fight against it, hampered by his own sense of justice and love of country, and worse still by the fact that his wife falls under the spell of Sandip; her relations with him are given with the utmost subtlety. He, like a born idolater, says, "All the fights of the world are really fights between hypnotic forces. Spell cast against spell — noiseless weapons which reach even invisible targets", and she is half, but only half, hypnotized by him. She sees at times his vulgarity, for she is herself neither a fool nor a vulgarian nor a minx; but she is half in love with him, half with his cause; and to her, as to him, the two sometimes become one

At the end the story grows confused; the counterpoint of the cause and the characters is lost in a mere muddle of both, and we are left hardly knowing what has happened. It is, in fact, not an end at all but merely a stop; and we wish to ask a number of questions which the author does not answer. But this failure is only at the end; and it comes because expectations so great have been raised. Besides, the book sets us thinking on our own account; it gives us the clue to a whole world before unknown to us; and, through that, to many things which puzzle us in our own world. Hitherto we have advanced in Europe because we have at least the desire for monotheism. In this book we see a world in which all the conflicting passions and instincts of men cease to be valued by any standard above them because they are deified. Sandip can call any instinct of himself or the mob a God or a Goddess, and so can decline the task of valuing it. Its divinity is in its strength, and that divinity is really a deification of self or country, at any rate of "things as they are." From all these deified instincts there is no appeal, if only they are strong enough to gratify themselves;

and Sandip can make the mob do what he will by mythologizing his purposes. He can clap the name of a God or a Goddess on to any herd or personal instinct. There is the same process at work always in any appeal to mob passion in any age or country; but with us it is hindered by our monotheism, since with us there is one God above the passions, Himself the judge of them all. Sandip does not really believe in his pantheon; but he has inherited a mental habit from it which enables him to work on the feelings of other polytheists. It is the mental habit of the demagogue in all ages and countries; and he makes us understand that there can be freedom nowhere until mankind are consciously on their guard against their own idolatries. That is really the theme of the book, and it is the more interesting because in the main it is worked out in characters, not in propositions.

19 June, 1919

#### THE TIMES

p11c5(D)

#### Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has sent a letter to the Viceroy of India protesting against the measures taken by the government in quelling Punjab disturbances and asking to be relieved of his knighthood.

1 August, 1919

#### THE CHURCH TIMES

p9b(W)

#### THE MIND OF INDIA

**The Home and the World. By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan, 6s.)**

ONE is probably justified in taking this novel as a symbolic picture of modern India; at any rate, the three principal characters, who in turn relate the story from their respective points of view, may well stand as types, even if this were not the conscious inten-

tion of the author. They are Nikhil, a Maharaja, Bimala, his wife, and Sandip, a nationalist agitator of advanced views. The men, who are both of them M.A.s. belong to the Indian *intelligentsia*; the woman, while retaining most of her native conventions, has absorbed a certain amount of Western ideas from an English governess supplied by her husband. The plot reveals the gradual alienation of Bimala from her husband, her infatuation for Sandip, her disillusion and repentance, and the tragic result of her act of treachery. The central figure is Bimala; she may stand as typical of her native land, half emancipated from the bondage of ancestral traditions, easily infatuated by ideas, liable to be swept off her feet by blind enthusiasm for *Swadeshi*, a passionate, unstable and pathetic figure. Sandip Babu, the preacher of nationalism and *Swadeshi*, with his cry of *Bande Mataram* ("Hail, Mother!" the watchword of the nationalist movement) is an Asiatic representative of that political philosophy of Bolshevism, Syndicalism, and Sinn Fein. Nikhil – well, Nikhil seems to stand to the ideals of the author himself; he is a Theist, but, above all, a philosopher sternly devoted to the service of that ultimate truth at which Sandip scoffs; he is a dreamer, something of a saint, a character of much beauty but of little force, of infinite charity and patience, learning little of the wisdom of the serpent though he retains the harmlessness of the dove. Nikhil himself is a nationalist, and supports the *Swadeshi* movement, but he stops short of steps that will ruin his people by depriving them of necessary goods of Western manufacture. Sandip stops short at nothing save danger to his own skin; he is a most eloquent Babu, and a most unpleasant villain. When the Mohammedans rise and start burning and slaying, Sandip catches the North-bound train in considerable haste, Nikhil rides out to quell the riot and gets his head broken. We are left with doubt as to whether he recovers and lives happily with Bimala once again or whether he dies in the cause of righteousness. Bimala, at the point where the story breaks off, had her luggage packed to go with her husband to Calcutta; whether she was ever in fact emancipated from the *purdah* and launched into the larger world also remains untold. It must be remembered that this novel is a translation, it is written for an Indian public in the first instance; and it reveals a certain aspect of the soul of India with which we English shall do well to make

ourselves acquainted. Nevertheless, the great bulk of India is less truly represented by any of the protagonists of the story than by Panchu the pedlar, with his starving children, living a life of grinding poverty, extremely punctilious about the caste of his aunt, and paying exorbitant sums to the Brahmins for his purification after the death of his wife. It is superfluous to say that this novel of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore's is written with great literary charm and skill; it may stand on its merits of the tiresomeness of a political allegory.

It is interesting to compare this work of Mr. Rabiudranath Tagore - he has recently abjured his knighthood - with that of Dostoevsky, not that there is any similarity between the two as artists; one might as well compare a cathedral organ to a flute - the great Russian, moreover, has the background of a deep Christianity. But both are Orientals and their ideal of human excellence is in many ways the same. Nikhil has much similarity to Aloysha: both are types of patient goodness based on that theory of non-resistance to evil which is so alien to the Western mind. Each has his revered teacher, though Chandranath Babu is a far lesser figure than Aloysha's Father Zossima. Sandip may be matched in many characters in *Les Possedes*. But this is only to say that the Indian mind is closer to the Russian than the British, and closest, moreover, in the weakest qualities of the Russian rather than in its strongest.

2 August, 1919

**THE TIMES**

p9c2(D)

### **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

Mr. Montague states in a written answer that the title conferred on Sir Rabindranath Tagore has not been revoked as he asked in his letter to the Viceroy.

11 October, 1919

**THE NEW STATESMAN**

p42-44(W)

### **THREE NOVELS**

*The Home and the World* By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Macmillan. 6s. net.

*The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* By V.B. IBANZE. Constable. 6s. net.

*Mary Oliver*. By MAY SINCLAIR. Cassell. 7s. net.

[only the relevant portion is reproduced]

The best-intentioned of Indian civil servants will usually close a discussion on the possibility of social intercourse between English and Indian in India by saying, "Ah! you see you cannot really know a man to whom you cannot introduce your wife. No Indian ever looks at a woman as we do - he regards our freedom as a mere invitation to insolence." No doubt the position of woman is the key to all social questions - though a man of one nation will mean his wife when he says "woman," while a man of another race will mean his mother. That in India there are grades of society where the treatment of women is a delicate, as considerate and yet as free as in any European country is shown in this remarkable novel of Tagore's. Tagore is no more typical of Indian society and tradition than Mr. Bernard Shaw is of the Roman Catholic Church in England; he is radical, a heretic and a pioneer; but there is reason to hope that his views are spreading beyond the comparatively narrow circle directly affected by the Brahmo Somaj. The two interests of *The Home and the World* are political and personal. There are only three characters that matter - Nikhil, his wife Bimala, and Sandip, the Swadeshi leader. Sandip is a direct actionist, a man with real sincerity, but capable of great self-deception and not above using the freedom which Nikhil grants him in his house to endeavour to seduce his wife. Nikhil has the strength of his belief in freedom. He does not trust Sandip's tyranny and more than the tyrannical Swadeshi professes to fight; though he knows Sandip's attitude to Bimala, he will not abandon his conviction that the purdah should be abandoned. The drama between the two is told with great simplicity and absence of pose and pretence.

Bimala slowly realises the essential coarseness of Sandip's character, the vulgarity of his appeal, when she discovers that he has used her enthusiasm for nationalism to gain her love she turns naturally to the sympathetic understanding of her husband. Nikhil, in his serene confidence, his disbelief in force or noise, is like a character in a Russian novel: he has none of that aggressive

competence which marks the hero in so much English fiction.

Tagore writes in a frankly old-fashioned manner: his two protagonists tell their own stories, and there is no effort to fill the book with elaborate psychology - the reader can deduce that for himself. ...

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***Period 1920-1924***

**Meeting of the East and the West  
European Success**



1920

5 May, 1920

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p11c4(D)

## **PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE**

### **TWO INDIAN PLAYS**

An organisation such as the "Indian Art and Dramatic Society," which exists for the purpose of familiarising us with the art of another country, must always keep before it one most important principle. It must give us the best, and under the best conditions - otherwise it only belittles the art it seeks to belaud. Sometimes in the past these special performances, under the auspices of the "East and West Union," have failed in this respect. They have given us work which was second-rate, or unsuitable for its purpose, or badly translated. It is therefore pleasant to be able to say of yesterday's programme that it was unexceptionable. It consisted of two short plays by Rabindranath Tagore (who is widely known in this country as a great poet), and both were full of dramatic force and moving interest. The first is called "Sacrifice," and deals with that age-long and universal dispute between Church and State. The King, by making a human decree that no more blood sacrifices shall be made to the goddess Kali, rouses the fury of the Priest, who declares that the goddess is insulted, and demands a sacrifice of kingly blood in expiation. But this attempt to overthrow the King recoils on the Priest's head; for in order to appease the goddess's wrath the Priest's own servant, a man of the royal caste, whom he loves, sacrifices himself, and the Priest is left face to face with the realisation that his lust for the vindication of his goddess was in reality nothing but his own personal ambition in disguise. It was all true, human, and moving, and was told with all the dignity and the wealth of imagery of which the Oriental languages are so full. In the part of the Priest, Mr. Frederick Sargent was excellent, up to a point; but he spoils the whole effect of his work by allowing himself to rant most uncomfortably in his long invocation to the goddess at the end of the play. Mr. Gordon Bailey was

very good as the King, and Miss Miriam Lewes made a beautiful and impressive Queen. Miss Marjorie Gordon, as a beggar girl, sang very sweetly, and though she had not very much to do, yet the part - that there was of it - called for both emotional power and technique, and she achieved a simplicity of method combined with an effectiveness which suggests her present line of business, and try her fortune in "straight" comedy. Mr. Denys Blakelock also did well as the self-sacrificing servant. Mr. Henry Oscar gave a clever thumb-nail sketch as the King's vacillating brother. The second play, "Chitra," is a beautifully-told story of how a warrior-prince, falling in love with a great soldier, begged from the gods for one year the gift of beauty with which to win her hero. It is granted. But the Princess Chitra finds when the year is gone that Prince Arjuna is tired of her softness and her feminine wiles; and it is after all in her own person that she wins his true and undying love. This play was splendidly cast, and called forth from Miss Moyna McGill as Chitra and Mr. Ion Swinley as Arjuna.

6 May, 1920

**THE STAGE**

p16(W)

### **THE PRINCE OF WALES'S AN INDIAN MATINEE**

The performances given by the Indian Art and Dramatic Society, under the auspices of the Union of East and West, with Mr. Kedar Nath Das Gupta as zealous hon. organiser, increase in interest and certainly in artistic achievement as their number grows, and this was shown at the special matinee at the Prince of Wales's on Tuesday, May 4, when was presented a double bill of plays by Rabindranath Tagore, "Sacrifice" and "Chitra," both of which have been seen before. It is to be repeated at Oxford on May 11, and other special matinees are being arranged to take place in such centres as Cambridge, Manchester, and Croydon. The motive of "Sacrifice," it will be remembered, is formed by the successful prohibition, by King Govinda, of sacrifices entailing the spilling of blood in the temples of Great Mother Kali, Goddess of

Ever-changing Time, with mouth-lapping blood and alter adorned with skulls; and it involves also rapid conversion of Raghupati, a hitherto fierce and rigid Brahmin priest, who finally overthrows the image of the dreaded Goddess, inveighing against impotent delusions and the lies that sucked up life-blood. This rather sudden change in the character of a seemingly implacable priest, his speedy self-abasement, and the vehement declamation necessitated by the part were set forth firmly and with power by Mr. Frederick Sargent, pathetic also in the lament over that too apt pupil, the lad Jaising, who, to avert the conspiracy, Alter v Throne, engineered by the Brahmin against the King, sacrifices himself as being, too, "of kingly blood." This youth was presented with admirable earnestness and sense of conviction by Mr. Denys Blakelock, a little finicking of tone, we thought; and his love, the beggar girl Aparna, the slaying of whose pet goat starts the action, was acted feelingly by Miss Marjorie Gordon, who also sang with taste the vocal portion of music specially composed by John H. Foulds, the orchestra being under the direction of Mr. F. Edbrooke. The Humanitarian King, whose orders call forth the gibe, "Are we to fall to the level of the Buddhists, and grant to animals the right to live?" and his childless and sacrifice-demanding Queen, Gunavati, were played ably by Mr. Gordon Bailey and Miss Miriam Lewes. Mr. Henry Oscar was good in a vein of semi-light comedy as the King's brother, and Generals were contrasted excellently by Mr. George Skillan and Nissankar H. Mendis.

In "Chitra," also produced by Mr. Miles Malleeson, with Miss Katharine Herbert as stage manager, the title-role was sustained with sensitive and delicate art by Miss Moyna McGill, whose musical tones were used delightfully in the utterance of Tagore's words fraught with poetic and luxuriant imagery. Maybe she did not indicate with sufficient clearness the difference between the valiant Princess of Manipur, brought up as a boy like Pinero's Amazons, and the voluptuous creature endowed with incomparable flower-beauty for a year that she might gain the love of Arjuna, a warrior-Prince, whom she causes to break his vow of celibacy. In this role Mr. E. Ion Swinley had also some beautifully-phrased purple passages to deliver, and his assumption of Arjuna was made sufficiently heroic. As Madana and Vasanta, the Gods of Love and Spring, shown seated at the

sides of the tableau curtain, Mr. Oscar and Mr. Skillan made impressive and dignified figures. Both plays gave keen interest to a large audience of Indians, and of those *en rapport* with the great Eastern Empire.

9 May, 1920

THE OBSERVER

p10c5(S)

### Prince of Wales' Theatre

#### INDIAN ART AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Having at his hand nothing more than "special matinee" tools such as two pairs of curtains and unlimited lightings, Mr. Miles Malleeson contrived to give so convincing a representation of Rabindranath Tagore's plays, "Sacrifice" and "Chitra", that one noticed the absence of scenery only to decide that very like vital could have been gained to the performances by its presence. Both plays have been seen in London recently and need no description, but on Tuesday the casts of each differed in some respects from the casts on previous occasions. In "Sacrifice" Mr. Denys Blakelock made a promising first appearance as Jaising, and Miss Marjorie Gordon's singing of Mr. Fould's song helped considerably in creating the atmosphere of the piece (which the orchestra did not by playing "Butterfly" before the curtain went up and "Samson" when it had fallen again).

"Chitra," the clear and delicate love allegory, was beautifully played by Miss Moyna McGill as the prince. The dark curtains here had the advantage of concentrating attention on the two actors and of greatly heightening the effect of Miss McGill's Indian boy's dress with its flame of bright colour. Miss McGill looked magnificent in it, moving through each scene with a lithe grace of gesture and speaking the poet's story with an effortless diction and beauty of feeling that together made up a performance of strong charm-fascination. It is perhaps ungrateful, in view of the pleasure that the play as a whole gave us to suggest that in the last scene both she and Mr. Swinley would have done themselves more justice had they needed to place less reliance on the prompter.

27 July, 1920  
**THE TIMES**  
 p11c5(D)

**Section: NEWS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore will read a paper on "Some Songs of the Village Mystics in Bengal," at Wigmore Hall next Thursday, at 8.15 pm.

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11 August, 1920  
**THE TIMES**  
 p10c5(D)

**VICEROYALTY OF INDIA**

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has promoted a memorial to the Prime Minister, which is now being signed by representative Indians, urging that steps should be taken to allay the spirit of mutual mistrust in India, which is growing perilously stronger between the European and the Indian. In this critical time, it is claimed, India needs at the helm a statesman of political wisdom and an exalted sense of righteousness.

In this connexion (the memorial says) the name that occurs immediately to us is that of the Indian Secretary, Mr. Montagu, who has earned the best of our gratitude and affection at a time of treat crisis, and whose services to the Motherland will, we are sure, be recognised in the history of the British Empire.

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23 September, 1920  
**THE TIMES**  
 p7c6(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived in Holland, where he has been invited to lecture at the Leyden, Utrecht, and Amsterdam Universities.

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7 October, 1920  
**THE TIMES**  
 p9c6(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS**

Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Paris on Tuesday from Belgium, accompanied by his son and his daughter-in-law.

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13 November, 1920  
**THE TIMES**  
 p9c2(D)

**TAGORE PLAY IN GERMAN  
 (FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)  
 BERLIN, NOV. 11**

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's new play *The King of the Dark Chamber* will be produced in Frankfurt-on-Main on November 27. It is said that this is the first occasion on which a long play by Tagore has been attempted in a European theatre.

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24 November, 1920  
**THE TIMES**  
 p11c6(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS**

According to Berliner Tageblatt, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore intends to institute a German library at Shanti Niketan, "So that India shall become acquainted with Germany," and to present for some charitable purpose in Germany a collection of lectures on religious subjects, which he delivered at his school at Shanti Niketan.

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1921

6 January, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p9c3(D)

### **"LEAGUE OF VAGABONDS"**

#### **SIR R. TAGORE'S VISION OF A FELLOWSHIP OF MAN**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, has in a conversation with Dr. Fort Newton, expressed his view that the League of Nations is a league of robbers.

It is founded on force - it has no spiritual foundation (he says). Humanity is not yet ready for it. A new machine be of little advantage if it be run by the old power for the old ends. Organisation is not brotherhood, and God cares more for a brother than He does for an empire. The great war was one of the blows of God working to break down our materialism, our selfishness, our narrow nationalisms. It made a dent; but only a dent, in the crust. Other blows will fall betimes. Until we learn to live together by the real law of our nature - the Law of Love - a veil will hide the beauty and wonder of the world, leaving us to wander alone or struggle to get her in confusion and strife.

In every land Sir Rabindranath finds men who seek the truth but they are outcasts for the most part - as Jesus was in his day. They are the keepers of the soul of humanity. There is need of a League of Vagabonds, some kind of fellowship between these men of God.

What is wrong with the world, in the poet's view, is that it does not know the truth. "It has forgotten, if it ever discovered, that down below race, rank, religion, there is a fundamental humanity - man as man - which is universal and everywhere the same. I am a man of India so to my origin, training, and outlook, but I am a human being, a man of humanity. Humanity will be perfect only when diverse races and nations shall be free to evolve to their distinct characteristics, while all are attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of love. All imperialism - except the imperi-

alism of love - is wrong. It brings little nations and various races together, like chips in a basket, but they do not unite, they are simply held together. There is no bond of union.

"Hereafter my life and all that I have - which is only a little - is to be devoted to establishing first in India, and then elsewhere, if possible, a university in which the better minds of all races, to whom we must look for leadership, may mingle, and the culture of the East and the culture of the West may be united in fellowship. It is men of world mind that we need, men of the spirit, who see that we are all citizens in the Kingdom of Ideas. In this way, long after I am gone, when in the purpose of God the time does come for a real League of Humanity, there will be men large enough to see the human race as a whole, who understand that the good of humanity as a family actually exists, and we shall not suffer such a bankruptcy of constructive faith and vision as we have in our day."

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7 April, 1921

**THE PALL MALL GAZETTE AND GLOBE**

p3c2-3(DE)

#### **India's Poet Laureate**

India's Poet Laureate - Dr. Rabindranath Tagore - has just returned from the United States after a lecture tour there. His stay amongst us is, I hear, likely to be short, as he has a number of lecture engagements on the continent.

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Before Dr. Tagore leaves England he will give an address at the Shakespear Hut, which now serves as a hostel and union for Indian students in this country, and, thanks to the enterprise and energy of the secretary, Mr. M. N. Chatterjee, is becoming the centre of Indian Life in London. The subject of the lecture, "Meeting of the East and West," really represents Tagore's present mission, for he is stirring to reconcile the Orient and Occident.

9 April, 1921

## THE MORNING POST

p3c7(D)

### THE WEST IN THE EAST

#### Sir Rabindranath Tagore on a Great Failure

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, addressing a large audience at the Indian Students' Union and Hostel, Kepple-street, yesterday on the "Meeting of the East and West," said he had lately paid a visit to the battlefields of France. The awful calm of desolation brought before his mind the vision of a huge demon. Something of the same kind of image was produced in his mind when he realised the touch of the West on Eastern life. The West came not with the imagination and sympathy that creates and unites, but with the shock of passion and the power of wealth. Western humanity had received a mission to be the teacher of the world. But the dominant collective idea in the Western countries was not creative. They were ready to enslave or kill individuals. The West had met the East. Such a meeting, in order to be fruitful, must have in its heart some great emotion of humanity, generous and creative. The world to-day was offered to the West. She would destroy it if she did not use it for the great creation of man.

The East was waiting to be understood by the Western races. The Western mind had not evolved an enthusiasm of chivalrous ideal that could bring this age to its fulfilment. The time had come when Europe must know that the forcible parasitism she had been practising on two great Continents must cause atrophy to herself. Modern politicians used the word "mandate" instead of the honest word "possession". Western civilisation was of no benefit to native races.

9 April, 1921

## THE NATION AND THE ATHENAEUM

p49:50(W)

### A League of Spirit

While the whole world is at war, it is some comfort to hear even one voice, however still and small,

persistently murmuring of peace. Amid the turmoil and shouting one may still catch the quiet words of an Indian pleading the cause of understanding, friendliness, and forbearance, as though they, and not devastating conflicts, were the most natural things in the world. In such a spirit it is that Rabindranath Tagore has been moving, almost silently, from country to country and from hemisphere to hemisphere, insinuating his conception of an International University. He has been received the kind of welcome that might have been expected for any Heavenly Visitant in the hell to which man has reduced mankind.

Suspected as a seditious agitator dogged by government spies, impugned by official detraction, or at the best, scornfully tolerated as an impracticable dreamer, he has trodden the well-worn and dolorous path of the spirit. But wherever he has been, in Europe or the United States, that one voice, however still and small, has persistently murmured of peace, and by his conception of an International University he has endeavoured to clear one thin track towards it.

The track leads up a Hill of Difficulty. At the outset it encounters the vast obstacle of official education imposed upon the Indian peoples by their English rulers. No one should make light of that system. It has given the "educated classes" of India a common tongue, by which they can understand each other, no matter from what Indian race they spring. It has fastened the sense of Indian unity, and has enabled the educated Indian to move freely about the world. It was revealed to him the real wealth of English literature, and the peculiarities of English morality and custom. So long as our great political writers were admitted into the official curriculum, it encouraged the growth of freedom, and a belief in the advantages of self-government. But, after all, it is a relic of the complacent and self-satisfied Victorian age, when our statesmen confidently expected that any people trained upon the English model would soon become as good as the English and what human being could hope for more? We all know the result - the inevitable result of a foreign culture imposed upon a race of widely different mind and habit. Some of us have known the educated Indian of twenty or thirty years ago - the sort of man who prided himself upon his power of writing classical English, of

imitating the English in every way, of composing verses in imitation of Swinburne or Shelley, and of pouring out English eloquence in the rolling periods of Gladstone, or still more antiquated orators. Under the pressure of an education that alone promised success, many became separated in thought and language from their own people; like that great jurist, Rash Behari Ghose, for instance, whose death was announced the other day. So intimate with English literature was he his converse was a succession of quotations; so endued with English political thought that his speeches read like Pitt's; but he knew little of his country's mind, and could hardly address his fellow-countrymen in his native tongue.

Many of us have known that Indian whose mind was filled with fine passages from our poets and rhetoricians, and who poured out Burke, or Mill, or John Morley (not always to illustrate the consistency of the Secretary of State for India), but in whom we felt that too much had been crammed by heart, and we missed the perfect intimacy which comes only from the ancestral mind and mother's milk. To the present writer it was a pitiful sight to see a true Indian poet, as Professor of Literature in the Calcutta University, set to instruct Indian youths in the text of Tennyson's "Princess" – a work which the Indian tradition and whole aspect of life rendered them utterly incapable of discovering, not only such beauties as might possibly be found, but any sort or shadow of meaning. Lest we should be thought prejudiced against our system, we may quote the words of a highly educated Indian, thoroughly conversant with Western ways, both here and in the United States. Speaking to the Conference of All-India Students at Nagpur last December, Lala Lajpat Rai said :

"You ought to remember that one of the greatest defects of the present educational system is that it enables you neither to think independently nor to act independently ... In my eyes honest patriotic work in road-repairing is infinitely superior to a Deputy Collector's post ... It is not the principal object of life to seek a career or to be an academic animal. Anybody who can speak English well considers himself to be an enlightened and great man. I have found many a fool among those who can read and speak excellent English. We ought to find the main pur-

pose of life in education rather than see it in the fashion which places us upon a false pedestal."

Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore himself writes of his own Western education that it made him feel like a tree not allowed to live its full life, but uprooted to be made into packing-cases :

"Mind," he continues in an unpublished pamphlet upon his own school at Bolpur, "when long deprived of its natural food of truth, and freedom of growth, develops an unnatural craving for success, and our students have fallen victims to the mania for success in examinations. The definition of this success is to be able to obtain the largest number of marks with the strictest economy of knowledge. It is a deliberate cultivation of disloyalty to truth, of intellectual dishonesty, of a foolishness by which mind is encouraged to rob itself. But as we are made to forget the existence of mind we are supremely happy in the result. We pass examinations and shrivel up into clerks, lawyers, police inspectors, and die young."

He shows that throughout India there is not a single University established in modern times where a foreign or a native-born student can properly become acquainted with the best products of the Indian mind. "For that we have to cross the sea and come to the doors of Germany and France." He appears to forget that amazing structure which one used to call "Jumbo's Joss-house" at the top of the Board in Oxford. Or perhaps no one enters to seek the Vedic wisdom there. At all events, his complaint is natural, and because of this false ideal in a Western education imposed upon the Eastern mind – because of what Tagore elsewhere calls the "education of a prison-house" – various attempts have been made to restore the ancient Indian method in an extreme fulness. Such an attempt may be seen in the Gurukula near Hardwar, just where the holy Ganges issues in purity from the mountains. There, under the rules of the stricter sect in the Arya Samaj, crowds of Indian youth remain for the sixteen years from eight to twenty-five, proctored from the feminine presence, except for a mother's visit once a year; almost without intermission studying the Sanscrit grammar (learnt by heart for eight years) and the Vedic scriptures; dressed, fed, and trained upon the simplest ancient

Indian lines. It was the same feeling of reaction against an alien method which prompted Mahatma Gandhi to declare at a public meeting in Mirzapur Square last January :

"I am thankful to modern civilization for teaching me that if I want India to rise to its highest height I must tell my countrymen frankly that, after years and years of experience of modern civilization, I have learnt one lesson from it, and that is that we must shun it at all costs ... I am here to tell my educated leaders that my experience of modern civilization worked at its best told me in emphatic terms in the year 1908: 'God save India from that modern curse!'

We all know to what a height of influence that reaction against our Western mind has brought Mahatma Gandhi - an influence almost omnipotent now over Mohammedans as well as Hindus. Even men who do not agree with his policy of Non-Co-operation, admit his power and his spiritual zeal. Rabindranath Tagore speaks of him as "the greatest of living men." Lajpat Rai, speaking in Bombay upon his return to India last year, exclaimed, "I challenge the whole world to produce another man like Mahatma Gandhi!" Most people recognize the power of the Non-Co-operation doctrine. Nearly all feel the attraction of a method so extreme, so natural, and in appearance, so free from violence. In a letter to the Duke of Connaught last February, Mahatma Gandhi wrote :

"The people have understood the secret and the value of non-violence as they have never done before. He who runs may see that this is a religious and purifying movement. We are leaving off drink, we are trying to rid India of the curse of Untouchability. We are trying to throw off foreign tinsel splendor, and by reverting to the spinning-wheel reviving the ancient and the poetic simplicity of life. We hope thereby to sterilize the existing harmful institutions."

This idealism has kindled the whole of India as no political teaching has kindled her before, not even in the Swadeshi time of fifteen years ago. Mahatma Gandhi is a Jain, and as such is

opposed to violence of any kind, and too scrupulous of life to kill the tiniest insect. But yet is not Non-Co-operation - the Boycott, the "Sending to Coventry" upon an enormous scale - in itself a kind of mental and moral violence? What school-boy would not rather be battered every day than "barred"? To hold no communication with the ruling race is a vengeance more terrible than rebellion and Rabindranath Tagore seems to show a truer zeal for peace and goodwill by founding an International University in which even the English will be welcomed among the other Europeans. The University is gradually growing out of the school which Tagore founded himself some twenty years ago near Bolpur, a hundred miles north of Calcutta, in healthy, beautiful, though barren surroundings, remote from the disturbances of towns. It is called "Shantiniketan," or "The Home of Peace," and there the restless Europeans may slowly, and amid the natural scenes, absorb whatever may be permanent or of value to his own soul in the wisdom, music, and arts of the Indian East, while unconsciously diffusing the best thought and mental methods of his home. Nor is the University merely an institute for books and learning. It co-operates with the villages around to cultivate the land, breed the sacred cattle, spin clothes, crush oil from the oil-seeds, and produce the few other products needed here below by man. By man and woman! For women students are admitted on equal terms, an incalculable advance for India, and Tagore's next step is to build one resident house for the men who will come from Europe, and one for women. In such an endeavour lies the way of peace. For, as he says, "the mission of education is to help us realize the inner principle of unity in all the knowledge and activities of our social and spiritual beings."

16 April, 1921

**SHEFFIELD WEEKLY NEWS**

p6c3(V)

[The same news printed in *The Morning Post*, 9 April, 1921]

20 April, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p9c6(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS  
ITEMS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore who is at present staying in Paris will deliver a lecture in English on "an Indian Folk religion" at the Musee Guimet tomorrow.

6 May, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p9c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS  
ITEMS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has been invited to visit Czecho-Slovakia.

9 May, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p9c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN  
NEWS ITEMS**

Two lectures on May 7 by Sir Rabindranath Tagore in Geneva were well attended

18 May, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p7c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN  
NEWS ITEMS**

A telegram from Hamburg states that Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived there with his family from Darmstadt. Sir Rabindranath yesterday visited

princess Bismark at Friedrichsruhe. He is proceeding to Stockholm in response to an invitation from the King of Sweden.

21 May, 1921

**THE QUEEN**

p568(W)

**SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

By EDWARD SHANKS

SOME WEEKS AGO I remarked on this page that the reception in this country of Sir Rabindranath Tagore as an exemplar of Eastern mysticism was not without its comic side. Since then I have been inundated with correspondence on the subject or, to translate the conventions of journalism into terms of ordinary truth, I have received one anonymous postcard asking me what I meant by it. The suggestion was not made at random or without warrant; and I am quite ready to explain what I meant by it. The appearance of two new books by Sir Rabindranath makes a convenient opportunity for doing so. These books are *Glances of Bengal* and *The Wreck* (Macmillan; 7s. 6d. net and 8s. 6d. net respectively).

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From the paper jackets of these books I learn that no fewer than twenty-one works by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, including seven volumes of poems and two novels, have now been produced in English. No other Oriental author, I imagine, has ever been translated to the same extent, or has been so well known and so much appreciated in England. When he made his first appearance in this country with *Gitanjali* an immense stir was set up. Here was a great poet, a poet of legendary greatness indeed, who was a subject of our Empire and whose work was yet unknown to us. In his own country he had a name of power, not only among the lettered, but also among the people. The boatmen of the Ganges sang his songs as they piled up and down the river. His rhythms and his images and his philosophy had passed into the heart of his race. He had such fame as hardly and European poet ever wins. He was the product

of a people who were simpler, more sensitive, more truly cultured than ourselves. Through him the East offered us a poetry broader and more universal than any we had ever known. It was an inspiring rumour, and everything that is romantic in the English reading public leapt to meet it; but it needs qualification in various ways.

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In the first place, I am credibly informed that everything which has been said about his fame in Bengal is perfectly true. Boatmen on the river and peasants in the fields do sing his songs to accompany their labour. Moreover, he is a good poet, and in other departments of literature a very good writer. But if he is a typical Oriental poet, then the Orient has nothing to offer us that we did not know already, beyond a little local colour. There is very little that is strange or disturbing in the work of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Those who wish to be impressed by glimpses of a life that is different from our own, by revelations of the Eastern mind which works in a way we can never understand, would do far better to go to Mr Kipling for what they want. It may, of course, be untrue that "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet." This may be one of the delusions that are never exploded because nobody who is not interested in their maintenance has sufficient knowledge to do so. But I am inclined to believe that the mystery of Sir Rabindranath can be explained in another way. He is not a typical Eastern poet: he is not a messenger bringing to the materialistic West the unknown doctrines of

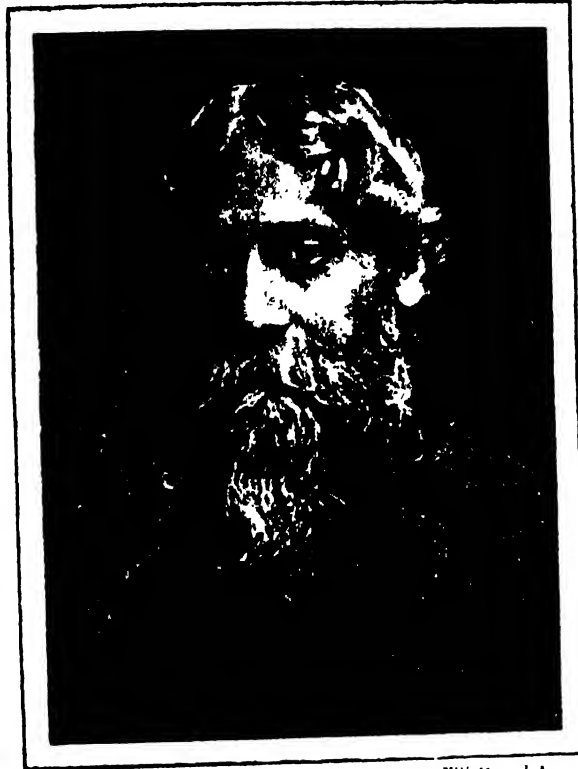
the mystical East. He is rather one of the first results of the modern Europeanised education of the intelligent Hindu. It would be unfair to call him "the Babu Poet" because, for English ears, that word is a term of amused contempt. But in India the Babu is not necessarily a comic figure. The word denotes a class and a type, and to that type Sir Rabindranath belongs.

In 1917 he published in English a volume entitled *My Reminiscences*, and from that book I quote a couple of extracts

Our literary gods then were Shakespeare, Milton and Byron, and the quality in their work stirred us most was strength of passion. In the social life of Englishmen passionate outbursts are kept severely in check, for which very reason, perhaps, they so dominate their literature, making its characteristic to be the working out of extravagantly vehement emotions to an inevitable conflagration. At least, this uncontrolled excitement was what we learnt to look on as the quintessence of English literature. The spirit of this Bacchanalian revelry of Europe found entrance into our demurely well-behaved social world, woke us up, and made us lively

It was then the fashion in Bengal to assign each man of letters a place in comparison with a supposed compeer in the West. Thus one was the Byron of Bengal, another the Emerson, and so forth. I began to be styled the Bengal Shelley. This was insulting to Shelley, and only likely to get me laughed at.

Very clearly the literature of Bengal, of which Sir Rabindranath is the most distinguished representative, is not an old and settled literature with a tradition of its own, but something new arising under



Elliott and Fry

### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Author of "*The Wreck*" and "*Glimpses of Bengal*" (Macmillan).

Fig. 29 *The Queen*  
21 May 1921, p38

a foreign stimulus. And the secret which he here betrays was always an open secret, easily read in the pages of all his books

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*Glances of Bengal* and *The Wreck* are no exceptions. The first of these books is a selection from letters written between 1885-1895. They are very good, but they will not entitle the author to rank among the great letter-writers of the world because they are too formal and too conscious. No one could guess with what purpose these passages were written; and the young poet who composed them for familiar letters to his friends, if he did not intend them for publication, must have been practising for works that were so intended. But they are vivid and delightful pictures of little scenes here and there in the author's country. What strikes one about them however, is their peculiarly European tone. Take this, for example:

Some evenings the post-master comes up to have a chat with me. I enjoy listening to his yarns. He talks of the most impossible things in the gravest possible manner.

Yesterday he was telling me in what great reverence people of this locality hold the sacred river Ganges. If one of their relatives dies, he says, and they have no means of taking the ashes to Ganges, they powder a piece of bone from his funeral pyre and keep it till they come across some one who some time or other has drunk of the Ganges. To him they administer some of this powder, hidden in the usual offering of pan, and thus are content to imagine that a portion of the remains of their deceased relative has gained purifying contact with the sacred water.

I smiled as I remarked "This surely must be an invention."

He pondered deeply before he admitted after a pause "Yes, it may be."

And he is European in what can be called only a somewhat Victorian style. His humour is always the gentle playfulness of the "eminent Victorian" temporarily unbending, as when, after being caught in a storm, he mocks mildly the poetic fiction that "the hero with the picture of his lady-love in his mind can pass unruffled through wind and rain.

No one could keep any face in mind, however lovely, in such a storm - he has enough to do to keep the sand out of his eyes." One finds a similar note in *The Wreck*, which is a novel. The hero of this book, the amiable Ramesh, is compelled by his father to marry a girl whom he has never seen and whom he does not want to marry. He therefore closes his eyes at the moment in the ceremony when the bride is unveiled, and takes her away without having looked at her. The river-boat on which they are travelling is wrecked, and Ramesh finds himself on an island with a young girl in the crimson dress of a bride, whom he takes to be his own and with whom he promptly falls in love. This foundation of the plot has in it elements which are sufficiently un-European; and yet the book is strangely Western in attitude and manner. And the description of Ramesh's entanglement with the charming, cultured and elegant Hemmalini whom he helped "with the philosophy for the B.A." is nothing but late Victorian philandering with a late Victorian girl.

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Sir Rabindranath then is not a poet who brings us news from the East, but one who returns to us what we have already lent; and though he is undoubtedly a good writer, yet his translated works do not justify the disturbance which was created when he was first introduced to the English public. Very likely in the original they deserve, by splendours of language and rhythm which cannot be reproduced, the reputation he has gained in his own country. But his reputation in England was to a considerable extent the result of self-deception and unconscious humbug in his many trumpeters. It is worth recording that he himself has not, as he might have done, fallen a victim to this. There is a story which is told of a dinner given to him by a company of English admirers. One of them after the meal, cried, "Master, will you not sing us one of your beautiful mystical songs?" Thereupon the Master, in whom ignorant adulation had not destroyed a sense of humour, folded his hands, cast up his eyes to Heaven, and sang in a lugubrious voice, while the English disciples swooned in ecstasy, one of rollicking and broadly comic drinking songs which he was accustomed to write in his youth.

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*23 May, 1921*  
**THE TIMES**  
 p9c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND  
 FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Copenhagen yesterday on his way to Stockholm. He gave a lecture on his own poetry last night, and will lecture to-day on Indian civilization at the University.

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*24 May, 1921*  
**THE TIMES**  
 p9c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND  
 FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, during a brief stay in Denmark, paid a visit to the Philosopher H. Hoffding and read a selection of his poems at the Copenhagen Students' Club, first in Hindustani and then in English. The students subsequently organized a torch-light procession to Sir Rabindranath Tagore's hotel. After lecturing at Copenhagen University yesterday Sir Rabindranath Tagore left for Sweden.

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*31 May, 1921*  
**THE TIMES**  
 p9c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND  
 FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore left Stockholm yesterday morning for Malmo on his departure from Sweden.

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*1 June, 1921*  
**THE TIMES**  
 p9c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND  
 FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived in Berlin from Stockholm. He will lecture at the University tomorrow on "The Soul of India"

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*3 June, 1921*  
**THE DAILY NEWS**  
 p1c5(D)

**INDIAN POET IN BERLIN**

**Girl Students Trampled on in Rush  
 to Hear Tagore**

**Our Own Correspondent**

**BERLIN, Thursday.**

Scenes of frenzied hero worship marked a public lecture given by Sir Rabindranath Tagore to-day at Berlin University. In the rush for seats many girl students fainted and were trampled on by the crowd.

So great was the enthusiasm which greeted Tagore that the famous theologian Harnack, who presided, has difficulty in obtaining order. A promise that the lecture will be repeated tomorrow failed to satisfy hundreds of students who were unable to obtain admittance to the lecture-room, and eventually the police had to be summoned to eject them from the University.

Tagore spoke in English on "The Soul of the Woods."

18 June, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p9c7(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND  
FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who has been lecturing in Vienna leaves to-day for Prague and Paris.

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26 June, 1921

**THE OBSERVER**

p15c4 S)

**TAGORE IN VIENNA**

**A REMARKABLE SERIES OF OVATIONS**  
(From Our Own Correspondent.)

**VIENNA**

Rabindranath Tagore was the distinguished guest of Vienna for a couple of days. This city paid special homage to the famous Indian poet, who, accompanied by his friend and "apostle" Bomanyi, was received with great honours, the Government placing a motor-car at his disposal, and giving a luncheon, at which prominent diplomats and politicians were present. Some members of the Society of Friends took Tagore to the poor quarters to acquaint him with the misery prevailing in the Austrian capital, which he desired to see. He was sorry to find that owing to the present financial straits, there is not a single professor of Indian science teaching in the University of Vienna.

I cannot remember any living poet who has been received with such unanimous and profound reverence and praise by the Vienna public and the Press, or who has made such a deep impression by his personal appearance as this great Bengal writer and thinker. His books, propagandised by Germans, have only recently found a larger circle of readers here. Of his dramas, "The Post Office" is known by its successful production by the "Theatre in der Josefstadt," whilst the performance of "Chitra," did not do full justice to the lofty spirit of the work.

The latter will be produced next season at the "Raimundtheater."

Rabindranath Tagore gave two lectures, one at the University and the second at the Grosser Konzerthausaal, in both cases reciting to very distinguished audiences and giving the proceeds to poor Vienna children and students. At the University he read in English "The Message of the Woods." The Indians were one with nature, he pointed out, but the Occident had lost that sense of oneness, even Shakespeare showed the great contrast between Man and Nature. The Indians were searching for harmony, which was absent in Western minds. Active loving-kindness was the Indians' end and vocation. Therefore they would again bring mental peace to mankind. In private conversation Tagore declared that he differed from European poets in not intending to represent the struggle of passion - his subject was tamed, ennobled passion. At the Grosser Konzerthausaal Tagore recited a number of his poems in the native idiom first, and in the English version afterwards. Both were found very beautiful in sound, though practically nobody understanding the originals, their remarkable hymn-like rhythms being much admired.

Tagore left for Prague, whence he proceeds to Paris by aeroplane, placed at his disposal by the Czech Government.

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2 July, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p11c7(D)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore embarks for India to-day at Marseilles in the Morea.

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9 July, 1921

**THE INQUIRER**

p368(W)

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE has addressed the following wise words to the Principal of his School at Bolpur on the subject of the Non-Cooperation Movement: "The man who begins to erect a wall to block all the doors and windows

of his house cannot be said to have any love for his house. On the otherhand, the house owner who uses all possible means to get the light of the day into all parts of his house really loves his house. When I found in the newspapers that Mahatma Gandhi was asking our ladies not to study the English language I realized that the erection of a wall round the country had commenced. In other words, we have begun to believe that the way of salvation lies in our converting our own house in a prison! We have begun to worship the darkness of our house by excluding all the light of the outside world! We have forgotten that those who forsake others and resolve to remain insignificant are forsaken by God exactly like those ferocious races who want to become great by attacking others."

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26 August, 1921

#### **PUBLIC OPINION**

p199(W)

#### **BONFIRE FOR TAGORE**

Rabindranath Tagore recently passed through Copenhagen on his way to Stockholm to make his Nobel prize address. At the University he delivered a lecture before an immense audience, and was acclaimed by a torch-light procession of the Danish students which started from Studenterforeningen and passed through the old city to the Hotel d'Angleterre, where Tagore from a balcony expressed his thanks for the unusual welcome.

Finally the students made a bonfire of their torches in front of the hotel. This characteristic Northern greeting was especially beautiful in the summer evening, and made a visible impression on the Indian seer.

2 September, 1921

#### **THE BIRMINGHAM MAIL**

p3c3(D)

#### **Section: CLUB AND SOCIETY GOSSIP**

#### **Tagore in Germany**

The most sensational book successes in America - such as the sale of more than 200,000 copies of "Main Street" - are insignificant in comparison with the present vogue for Rabindranath Tagore in Germany (says the "Manchester Guardian").

That is the report brought home by a New York publisher who has just returned from a European tour. When he was in Berlin Tagore's publisher had placed an order of 1,000,000 kilograms - more than 2,000,000 pounds - of paper for his books/ That was enough for 3,000,000 volumes.

The German people, according to the same authority, are publishing and reading more books than ever before. Treatises on philosophy, art and religion are at present far out-selling works of fiction. For example, Keyserling's "Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen", a bulky book in two volumes, has sold over 50,000 copies. Another book in special demand is Spengler's "Das untergang des Abendlandes".

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5 September, 1921

#### **THE MORNING POST**

p3c3(D)

#### **UNION OF EAST AND WEST**

#### **Indian Plays at Hampstead**

The Union of East and West gave an open-air performance of Indian plays in the beautiful gardens of Lord Leverhulme's house at Hampstead on Saturday afternoon. The plays selected were "The Farewell Curse," an unpublished playlet by Rabindranath Tagore, "Kunala," a sketch by Dhan Gopal Mukerji, and "Savitri," a lyrical drama in two acts by K.N. Das Gupta.

The first takes but a few minutes, and there are only two speaking characters in it, Kacha, son of the teacher of the Gods, and Devayam, daughter of the teacher of the titans. The story is that the Gods and Titans are in constant feud. Kacha, who had come from paradise to learn the secret of immortality from the Titans, refuses to stay with Devayam, and as he takes his leave she pronounces a deadly curse against him. The piece was played effectively by Mr. Henry Oscar and Miss Hazel Jones.

"Kunala" reminds one of the story of Potiphar's wife and Joseph, with a more tragic sequel. The plot is laid in 200 B.C. Apsara, a Greek Queen, and wife of the Emperor of India, is in love with the Crown Prince Kunala. She is much younger than her lord, but her passionate entreaties are spurned by the prince. Enraged, she says he shall yield or be blinded. He chooses the latter alternative, and in her temporary absence he tears out his own eyes. Miss Florence Buckton as the Queen has a part which to Western ears seems rather crude, and she hardly appeared so abased as her works implied. Mr. Frederic Sargent was impressive as the Prince.

"Savitri" is probably known to many. Adapted from the legend of the Mahabharata, it is the story of a Princess who, for love, gives up all, even though she knows that her lover can only live for a year. So great, however, is her love that she meets Death boldly as he comes to claim her husband, and by the fervour of her importunity she wins back life for the dead, despite the trials of her faith and love which Death imposes on her. It is a moving story, simple yet profound, with its universal theme—the unspeakable self-sacrificing love of woman. Miss Florence Buckton is a feeling and sympathetic Savitri. Mr. David Bain, played the husband adequately, and Mr. Frederic Sargent made good use of his fine voice as Death.

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12 September, 1921

**THE TIMES**

p7c6(D)

## **GANDHI'S FOLLOWING OUT OF HAND**

### **SIR R. TAGORE INSULTED**

**(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS)**

**CALCUTTA, SEPT. 9**

Bengal is more and more turning away from Mr. Gandhi, who has had an interview with Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the poet. The latter is against the boycott of Western education and cloth. The result of the conference is a strictly guarded secret, but followers of Mr. Gandhi had burnt foreign cloth in front of the poet's house. Many Bengalis consider this act to have been done with a view to insulting the poet.

Mr. Gandhi addresses five and six public meetings daily in Calcutta.

Mahomed Ali, who is also here, is expecting to be arrested hourly. He has cautioned the crowds not to be violent when he is arrested, adding that many Europeans owe him their lives. "If I deserved violence (he said) it would have been a hot day to-day to many Europeans."

**BOMBAY, SEPT. 9**

Mr. Gandhi, writing in *Young India*, says that non-cooperators must wash their hands clean of complicity in the Moplah acts of violence. The misguided Moplahs, he asserts, had rendered a distinct disservice to the sacred cause of Islam and Swaraj.

In another article, he says he hopes the rumour of the impending prosecution of the Ali brothers is untrue, for "no two men have so successfully restrained Mohammedans as these two patriots." He maintains that prosecution would mean the intention to strangle the ever-growing Caliphate agitation and amount to a direct challenge to Indian Muslims, indeed to the whole of India, since the Caliphate is an Indian question and not merely a Mahomedan grievance. He urges the people to endure the gravest provocation for the sake of religion.

and country, and to refrain from anger if the Alis are incarcerated.

"We have (he adds) dared openly to desire and to prepare the end of the existing system of government, and have challenged the administrators to do their worst. We must neither be surprised nor angry if they treat us seriously and take up the challenge. They must some day take us at our word and put us to the invited test."

The whole tone of the article is intended to be pacific, but it suggests that Mr. Gandhi is extremely apprehensive of coming events, and obviously does not believe that the masses excited by him are capable of obeying his exhortations to calmness.

20 October, 1921

### THE BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE

p8c3(D)

#### Section: Books of the Day

#### Tagore Poems

The reputation of Rabindranath Tagore, like that of Robert Browning has suffered from a section of his readers who have made him a cult, and by extolling his more elusive and baffling work, discourage the general reader. However, in "THE FUGITIVE" (Macmillan, 7s.6d.), the proportion of poems which present difficulty to Western readers is small, and most of the book is quite representative of Tagore's genius. One of the best tells of an ascetic to whom jealous gods sent a girl to serve him. But she thought better of it and left.

For years he sat alone till his penance  
was complete

The Lord of the Immortals came down  
to tell him that he had won Paradise

"I no longer need it," said he.

The God asked him what greater reward  
he desired

"I want the girl who gathers twigs."

Another fable-poem, which is quite delightful, represents an artist "a man who had no useful work only vagaries of various kinds" sent by mistake to

the wrong Paradise - "one meant only for good, busy soul" Short dramas and lyrics compose most of the book, and there is a prayer, which is simple beauty and ranks with those of R. L. S.

23 October, 1921

### THE OBSERVER

p5c2-S

#### "THE FUGITIVE"

Rabindranath Tagore's "The Fugitive" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net) consists of work which we imagine belongs principally to his early period. When will publishers and translators (there is no translator's name given) learn that their first duty is to give the date of the work of a foreign author? The love-poems in this book are not marked by any characteristics which were not already found in "The Gardener", and the rather verbose language is not, in English, counterbalanced by any beauty of rhythm. The little plays which are interspersed in the lyrical poems are very various in merit. They all have brevity and a certain dignity of form, one is equal to the best Tagore has given us in the past. "Ama and Vinayaka" is a tragedy of religious bigotry. Ama, a Hindu girl and a Brahmin, has married a Mahomedan, and after his death in battle she meets Vinayaka, her father, and Rama, her mother. The play consists simply of the parents upbraiding and Ama's defence, and finally of her death, but it is written with intense simplicity, and the way in which the father gradually loses his anger as his wife's increases is very powerfully shown.

24 October, 1921

### THE DAILY CHRONICLE

p8c4(D)

#### "TRIAL BY LUCK"

#### NEW TAGORE PLAY PRESENTED BY UNION OF EAST & WEST

One of those little fables which are true of any nation and any state of civilisation is told with a

simplicity and charm characteristic of its author in "Trial by Luck," a new play by Rabindranath Tagore, presented at the Wigmore Hall on Saturday night by the Union of East and West.

It showed Miss Mary Summer as a Princess, Rani Kalyani, who was everything that was virtuous and good and generous — an Indian Lady Bountiful.

Her servant Khiri (Miss Katherine Herbert) was jealous of her, and fancied it would be easy enough to be gracious with nothing to do and the possession of everything that the heart of woman could desire. So Lakshmi (Miss Margaret G. Mitchell) the Goddess of Luck, arranged that they should change places. Of course Khiri turned out just as cross-grained in the Princess's place as she had been as a servant, and when the princess herself turned up in humble guise was as rude to her as could be.

Familiar as the theme of place-exchanging is, Tagore manages his "proverb" with the most delicate skill, and without pressing home too forcibly (for it is not wholly true) the moral that jealousy is needless, that all rests with character, and that good fortune is often a surer trial than adversity.

### OLD SANSKRIT ROMANCE

The Tagore play was followed by an English translation of the old Sanskrit romance, "Malati and Madhava" written by Bhavabhuti in the eighth century. This old play has been described as "the Sanskrit 'Romeo and Juliet,'" but though it tells the usual Sanskrit love story with a happy ending, its poetic quality is not equal to that of "Sakuntala."

It has, however, quite a clever double plot of two love affairs, with young love triumphant in each case against elderly rivalry, and with one of the young men masquerading as a bride to save his lady from unwelcome nuptials. "Malati and Madhava" is especially interesting in view of its incidental contrasts between Buddhism and Hinduism, and its sidelights upon the question of human sacrifice. Miss Mary Summer played Malati, the heroine, with her Old Vic comrade, Mr. Ernest Milton, for lover.

24 October, 1921

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p4c5(D)

### WIGMORE HALL

### TWO INDIAN PLAYS

It is a matter of serious doubt whether the performances of Indian plays which the Union of East and West arrange from time to time are really worth the pains and the money expended on them. Experience of these productions shows increasingly that we do not get in the English versions anything of the quality, which makes them to be acclaimed on all hands as literary masterpieces in their original tongue. That "Malati and Madhava" written by Bhavabhuti in the eighth century, really deserves to be called the "Hindu Romeo and Juliet" we are not in a position to deny. But we are entitled to say very positively that the English translation of the play has no right to be mentioned in the same breath with Shakespeare's work. There are certain similarities in plot, but then dozens of chief magazine stories have been written on the same theme. The plot matters little, the language much. And Bhavabhuti's presumably beautiful language is served up to us in halting blank verse quite devoid of poetry. Imagine Shakespeare making a character resolve to "expatiate on the merits" of Romeo to Juliet! That is the kind of thing we get quite unashamedly put before us as a fair translation of a poet whose work has lived for centuries. Unless a more worthy version than this can be obtained, it is really little use to engage a distinguished cast of actors and hope for the best; the worst is quite certain to happen. "Trial by Luck," by Rabindranath Tagore, which preceded the longer piece at Saturday's performance at the Wigmore Hall, is a simple little fairy tale on the Christopher Sly model. The Goddess of Luck makes a princess's grumbling servant herself a princess, and so teaches her that nobility of nature and the reverse depend on character and not on position; then the servant, in humbled mood, finds herself once more a servant. The little play has enjoyable moments; but it would be better still in story form.

As to the acting, Miss Mary Summer did excellently as Malati (Juliet), and also as the princess in

the shorter play. She achieved a depth of sincerity equalled by nobody else, and her make-up was really convincing. In most of the cast the effect of Indian clothes was to make the actresses look startlingly and uncompromisingly English. Mr. Ernest Milton acted strenuously as Madhava (Romeo), and Mr. Wilfred Fletcher did well as his friend. One rather upsetting detail was the "steep and rickety" flight of steps which provided a second exit from the make shift stage. After Miss Winifred Oughton (who displayed a pleasant touch of humour in her first part) had fallen down then, and Mr. Milton had followed her example, it became impossible to keep our attention on the play owing to our sympathy with the unfortunate performers and anxiety as to whether they would hurt themselves. But all was well. The evening passed off somehow without any casualties.

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24 October, 1921

### THE SCOTSMAN

p2c5(D)

THE FUGITIVE. By Rabindranath Tagore. 7s. 6d. net. London: Macmillan.

Prose in form, the pieces in Sir Rabindranath Tagore's new volume can be adequately described only as poetry. Some are translations, such as the lines from the Hindi songs of Juanadas. Some are dialogues, so intensively cultivated as to become miniature dramas, in which legendary Indian kings and queens and priests and warriors figure all the more impressively because they are nebulous and vague. The piece named in the title is arhythmical ode that seems to address the spirit of the universe as an Eternal Fugitive outstripping in countless emblems of urgency the aspirations and imaginations of a lover in persiut. All are characteristic of their writer, both in their intrinsic merits and as remarkable achievements in English by an Oriental.

26 October, 1921

### THE DAILY MAIL

p5c5(D)

#### Section: BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS

#### TAGORE'S NEW POEMS

As a poet Rabindranath Tagore has conquered Europe as well as India. In every German book-shop, as well as in the Scandinavian countries, there are rows of his books. His new one, "The Fugitive" (Macmillan 7s 6d), is likely to be as warmly welcomed and as lovingly treasured as any. These rhythms are almost all of them shot through with imaginative beauty; they conjure up haunting images; they enhance the mystery and splendour of life. Here is all exquisite silhouette

The water is dumb, the bamboos are darkly still,  
a wristlet tinkles against the water-jar from down  
the lane

Row no more, but fasten the boat to this tree  
for I love to look of this land

The evening star goes down behind the temple  
dome, and the pallor of the marble landing haunts  
the dark water

Belated wayfarers sigh, for light from hidden win-  
dows is splintered into the darkness by intervening  
wayside trees and bushes. Still that wristlet tinkles  
against the water-jar, and retreating steps rustle from  
down the lane littered with leaves

The night deepens, the palace towers loom spec-  
tre-like and the town hums wearily.

Row no more, but fasten the boat to a tree

Let me seek rest in this strange land, dimly lying  
under the stars, where darkness tingles with the tin-  
kle of a wristlet knocking against a water-jar

The advantage of this "free" poetry is that it  
sounds equally well in any language, so it be de-  
cently translated.

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2 November, 1921

**THE MORNING POST**

p11c2(D)

**INDIAN PLAYS AT CAMBRIDGE**

**Union of East and West**

**(From Our Special Correspondent.)**

**CAMBRIDGE, Tuesday**

The Society known as the Union of East and West made a pleasant invasion of Cambridge to-day for the purpose of performing at the Guild-hall a series of Indian plays, rendered into English. The aim of the Society is to bring fuller understanding of the spirit of the Orient to the Occident, and though one may doubt their claim that their cause, "when realised, will bring universal brotherhood and permanent peace among all nations," one cannot fail to appreciate their earnest endeavour to present the poetic drama of India in a form which we can understand and appreciate.

It is appropriate that the Society should endeavour to extend its sphere of activity to Cambridge, for the University is without doubt prepared to admit that, in the mass, it fails to understand the character and aspirations of the ever-present body of Indian native students. It requires great courage, indeed great confidence, to take, say, a dialogue of Rabindranath Tagore and turn it into English verse and present it to an English audience. The company who came to Cambridge to-day were lacking neither in courage nor skill; but it was impossible for them to preserve the true spirit of the native plays, which had already wilted before the test of Anglicisation.

In the afternoon the first piece was "The Farewell Curse," by Rabindranath Tagore. It is a dialogue full of Tagore's wonderful lyrical sense, but through Mr. W. Oughton, as Kacha, the son of the Spiritual Teacher of Gods, and Miss Stella Wilkinson, as Devayani, the daughter of the Teacher of the Titans, tried hard, one felt that would have given better understanding and greater pleasure if read quietly by one's own fireside.

**AN ARTISTIC SUCCESS**

The second play, "Savitri," adapted from the legend of the Mahabharat, had all the beauty of every legend of every country which has been preserved through the ages. The appeal of Savitri, the beautiful Princess, to Yama, the god of death for the life of her husband, was the one artistic success of an otherwise rather forlorn afternoon. Mr. Campbell Fletcher, as the great god, brought a beauty of diction to his lines which even the vagaries of a limelight could not destroy.

An amusing sketch, the Maharani of Arakan, written by that master of comedy, George Calderon, completed the afternoon programme. It contained the well-worn ingredients of the fairy story, a prince in disguise and a fugitive princess. Its undoubted success was due almost entirely to the acting of Chandra Nath, who brought the true Indian spirit of enjoyment of a good but simple jest into an amusing situation.

**AN INDIAN ROMEO JULIET**

"Trial by Luck," a comedy by Rabindranath Tagore, was the first play presented in the evening. Around a simple story of charitable princess, misguided maid, and Lakshmi, the Goddess of Luck, is woven the universal truth that good works bring their own reward. The acting was on the whole quite good, and both the principals, Miss Katherine Herbert as the maid and Miss Mary Sumner as the princess, spoke their lines well and with proper appreciation of their spirit.

Another legend from Bhavabhuti, "Malati and Madhaba," which we are told is the Indian Romeo and Juliet, followed in seven episodes. Here, it must be confessed, came disappointment. This was not entirely the fault of the company, for the story was difficult to follow, and the limited illusion possible with such meagre scenery and effect made it difficult for the audience to realise the atmosphere of so romantic and so foreign a play. The acting was uneven, and it was unfortunate that such considerable and audible reference to the prompt-book was necessary. Miss Mary Sumner was again very pleasing in the principal part.

3 November, 1921

## THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

p9(W)

### Section: NOTES BY THE WAY

The question, how far is Rabindranath Tagore a Christian, is answered in a decisive way by Mr. E. J. Thompson in his book on the poet published by the Oxford Press. Mr. Thompson writes with full knowledge, not only gathered from books, but from personal intercourse with the author of *Gitanjali*. "His father was the least Christian of the Brahmo leaders. The poet repelled the suggestion that he had been influenced by Christian thought in writing *Gitanjali*, by saying that he had never read the Bible - a confession helps to explain the remarkable thinness of his essays on Christ." And yet, though this is true, is not the whole truth: "Nevertheless", continues Mr. Thompson, who is Principal of Wesleyan College, Bankura, "Christianity is in the air of India, and Rabindranath has not escaped its influence. What is best in *Gitanjali* is an anthology from the ages of Indian thought and brooding; but it is the sun of Christian influence that has brought these buds into flower."

West the unknown doctrines of the mystical East. This latest collection of his prose-poems conveys rather the impression of a personality which is one of the finest results of the modern Europeanised education of the intelligent, refined, and high-bred Hindu. The same splendour of language and rhythm which marked his other work marks these new pieces. The rhythms of almost all of them are shot through with imaginative beauty; they conjure up haunting images that enhance the splendour and mystery of life. Some of them are translations, such as the lines from the Hindu songs Janadas. Some are dialogues, miniature dramas marked by beauty and a certain dignity of form. One of the best of these is "Ama and Vinayaka", a tragedy of religious bigotry. Ama, a Hindu girl and Brahmin, has married a Mahomedan, and after his death in battle she meets Vinayaka, her father, and Rama, her mother. The play consists simply of the parents' upbraiding and Ama's defence, and finally of her death. The rest are love poems and lyrics, beautiful rhythm and in diction. One, the title piece, is a rhythmical ode, that reminds one faintly of Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn," in which the poet addresses the spirit of the universe as an Eternal Fugitive outstripping the aspirations and imaginations of a lover in pursuit.

7 November, 1921

## THE ABERDEEN DAILY JOURNAL

p2c6(D)

### PROSE POEMS BY TAGORE

THE FUGITIVE. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

NO other Oriental author has been translated to the same extent, or has been so well known and so much appreciated in Britain as has Tagore. In his own country Tagore has a name of power, not only among the lettered, but also among the people. The boatman of the Ganges sing his songs as they ply up and down the river. His rhythms and his images and his philosophy have passed into the heart of the race. Yet to our mind Tagore is not a typical Oriental poet - not a messenger bringing to the materialistic

11 November, 1921

## THE IRISH TIMES

p2c3-4(D)

### TWO EASTERN POETS

The difference between the seventeen-syllable Hokka of Japanese poetry and the interminable epics of India seems too immense to be bridged over - the one clear, precise, a picture fixed in a few strokes for all time; the other as mysterious in its outlines as vague in its philosophy. Yet, in spite of the special difference, he who reads Yone Noguchi and Tagore will find many points of contact. Each loves the moods of nature and each has the quick imagination that can fix a picture for ever in a few simple words - as art that, save for a few examples in Coleridge, seems to have died in Europe since the Greek anthology was written. A love of childhood is apparent in both, and in each dwells the mystery of the beyond. With

poets of such a world-wide reputation it is necessary to say that in each there is the perfect finish of art and a mastery of language that is remarkable in those writing in a foreign tongue.

Yet the art is different, the outlook on the world is subtly varied, and the Indian is nearer to Western art, revealing the common source of stock. The art is less self-conscious, the creator has merged himself in the thing created. Noguchi appears to stand and look at his picture. Take the poem of O Hara San. The maiden for whom the boy broke the branch of cherry-blossoms:

"Speaking no word, ran away as a breeze,  
Leaving behind the silver evening moon,  
And hid from me in the shadow of a pine-tree."

The piece is, like many others of the same type, perfect with finish of Japanese painting. Yet put beside it one of Tagore's — the ferry-boat plying between the two villages facing each other across the narrow stream, "The water is neither wide nor deep, a mere break in the path, like a break in the words of a song across which the tune gleefully streams. The ferry-boat piles between, age after age, from seed-time to harvest." Tagore gropes for the meaning of things, he is seeking the spirit behind the veil. It seems to be this spirit of seeking that gives the title of this collection of little allegories, little pictures, bits of drama. "The Fugitive" wanders now as a lover, now as the beloved, now as a seer, and always as a poet, "following the stars to where day breaks behind the hills." Ever before him another is flying, whose footsteps only can be traced.

Noguchi in those of his poems which are not purely Japanese has been much influenced by Walt Whitman's outlook on nature, on life, and on religion. This was almost inevitable in the case of a Japanese who has spent much of his life in the United States. His rhythm (for rhyme has no part in his art) is learned in the same school; his language is remarkably rich and descriptive. Tagore borrows from no one. None reading his work can tell from what storehouses he has drawn. He recalls, as we have said, the Greek anthologists. There are passages when we think of Wordsworth: "In the days when the autumn light shimmers on the mellowing ears of rice, I seem to remember a past when my mind was everywhere, and even to hear voices as of playfel-

lows echoing from the remote and deeply-veiled past." There is, too, a passionate love of wild nature that echoes of Shelley; yet he is unique. In depth of thought he sounds where the Japanese has never reached; he has scaled the heights and plumbed the depths where everything that is best in the thought and religions of the world has its dwelling-place.

"The Fugitive". By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan, 7/6 net.

"Selected poems of Yone Noguchi," London: Elkin Mathews. 12/- net.

15 November, 1921

### THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p5c3(D)

THE FUGITIVE. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp.200. 7s. 6d. net.

As one volume of Mr. Tagore's poetry is succeeded by another, it becomes increasingly clear that their encompassing emotional mood, their fundamental tone or colour, has, at least for us Western readers, far more significance than any details of incident or concern. We well remember the delight with which, now many years ago, we read his "Gitanjali." There message was remote, it was often strange or unintelligible, but the refined, melodious, incense-laden prose in which it was delivered had the perfect appropriateness which is the hallmark of art. We have since idylls, tales, dramas, and even lectures of Mr. Tagore's, and have recognised that in whatever he does the same refinement, the same melody, the same incense are interfused, and the result has been that we have more and more lost the power of distinguishing one of his themes from another. "The Fugitive" has a pattern which we do not remember to have seen, in any previous work. It is, as it were, woven of three threads: the first a thread of personal soliloquy, the second of allegorical dialogue, the third of popular lyric. All are no doubt exquisitely interrelated, so that the meaning of each is enhanced by its place among the rest. But we must admit that we have not ourselves been able to distinguish these niceties. We treasure the volume as we treasure a Persian carpet or a Japanese print; the colour is good, but we do not understand the thoughts of those quaint figures

boating or fishing in the sunlight or the rain. Or better, we may compare the effect of Mr. Tagore's verse to that Ossian, where in the cloud and darkness by the King's grave on the cold hillside we seem to join in the whole world's lamentations and to forget what king is dead. This is not to say that in reading "The Fugitive" we have not encountered many gleams and jewels of visionary beauty; Mr. Tagore's work is never without them. But as we know his incense more we like it less. It is as if the spirit of poetry came before us muffled and veiled. Happily, there are rents in the veil, through which air enters and radiance streams forth for our refreshment and delight.

17 November, 1921

### THE BRITISH WEEKLY

p160(W)

#### THE FUGITIVE\*

No one could say to  
Sir Rabindranath Tagore,  
"You grow correct who once  
with rapture writ."

Book after book comes from him with the same even rapture, expressed in melodious prose. This is as characteristic a piece as any from the present collection. "Take your holiday, my boy; there are the blue sky and the bare field, the barn and the ruined temple under the ancient tamarind. My holiday must be taken through yours, finding light in the dance of your eyes, music in your noisy shouts. To you autumn brings the true holiday freedom: to me it brings the impossibility of work; but lo! you burst into my room. Yes, my holiday is an endless freedom for love to disturb me." There is variety in this book. Stories, dialogues and songs alternate. Some have a more Indian flavour than others. Perhaps the pieces which make most impression on the mind are the least ambitious, the least mystical, those in which details are noted and simple emotions chronicled; however slight in texture, they have the real note of charm.

\*"The Fugitive". By Sir Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.)

17 November, 1921

### THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

p18(W)

#### TAGORE'S IDYLLS

*The Fugitive. By Rabindranath Tagore*  
(Macmillan 7s. 6d. net.)

Those to whom Rabindranath Tagore as yet only a name will do well to make his acquaintance in these graceful idylls. The famous poet of Bengal has a definite place in contemporary English literature, for no one, English or Indian, so successfully handles that difficult medium which we may call (for want of a better name) prose poetry. A facility tending to monotony and boredom is the besetting peril of prose poets. Heretical as some may regard the opinion we have always had to struggle with an incipient yawn in reading William Morris's later romances in this vein Tagore escapes the danger. His language is exquisite, his touches of Eastern colour give the effect of a series of dainty pictures, and the whole is vitalised by keen spiritual insight and human feeling. His slightest love songs reveal the depth and delicacy of his perceptions.

When we two first meet my heart rang out in music "She who is eternally afar is beside you for ever."

That music is silent, because I have grown to believe that my love is only near, and have forgotten that she is also far, far away.

Music fills the infinite between two souls. This has been muffled by the mist of our daily habits.

On shy summer nights, when the breeze brings a vast murmur out of the silence, I sit up in my bed and mourn the great loss of her who is beside me. I ask myself, "When shall I have another chance to whisper to her words with the rhythm of eternity in them?"

Wake up, my song, from thy languor, rend this screen of the familiar, and fly to my beloved there, in the endless surprise of our first meeting!

Three facts emerge from this little fragment. It is unquestionably poetry, despite its setting as prose. It is a page of genuine experience from the book of

human love. Thirdly, it contains a hint, elaborated in other poems, that "love" in Tagore's sense concerns more than a given pair of lovers. To Tagore it is what "that Lady Beauty" was to Rossetti, an ideal towards which body, spirit and nature are alike yearning consciously or unconsciously.

If Tagore's gentle, all-tolerant creed seems at times too orientally vague to the English reader, there is still enough concrete beauty and pathos to make good the poet's claim to that title. Take this, from the poem on a dead wife:

My mind tried to console me ..  
"How do you know?" I asked   lost to the world?"

It is always on the solid foundation of our common human experience that Tagore builds up his delicate structure of spiritual values.

18 November, 1921

### THE NORTHERN ECHO

p4c6(D,

#### TAGORE'S "THE FUGITIVE"

The great Indian poet's new volume contains poems, dramas, songs and parables, some of these being translations, and in this, as in other respects, differs from Sir R. Tagore's preceding books in character.

One of the stories is of a young god who came to the earth to learn the secret of immortality (a surprising adventure in itself), and who fell in love with his teacher's daughter. His life's work triumphed over his love. Two storyettes show up the futility of revenge. There is a tragedy of the king who sacrificed his only son at the bidding of Ritvik, the high priest; and there are delightful parables such as those of the ragged villager (page 135), and the idle painter (page 165).

Lovers of the early Indian poet Kabir, will cherish the beautiful story of his compassion which they will associate with Tagore's own tale of the mother and son in his volume "Fruit-gathering." Of death Tagore writes: "The mercy of death works at life's core, bringing it respite from its own foolish persistence. The stormy sea is lulled at last in its rock-

ing cradle; the forest fire falls to sleep on its bed of ashes." Later on, he dwells upon, the pain and mystery of this great happening; in his story of an orphan boy (page 60).

Many beautiful sayings occur in the book; e.g.: "Music fills the infinite between two souls. This has been muffled by the mist of our daily habits."

"Calumny dies of weariness dancing on tongue-tips. Do not drive it into the heart to gather strength."

"I looked at the dust by the roadside. There was a tiny flower among thorns. And I cried "The world's hope is not dead!"

At the close of the volume is this prayer:

"Give me the supreme courage of love, this is my prayer - the courage to speak, to do, to suffer at Thy will, to leave all things or be left alone Strengthen me on errands of danger, honour me with pain, and help me climb to that difficult mood which sacrifices daily to Thee.

"Give me the supreme confidence of love, this is my prayer - the confidence that belongs to life in death, to victory in defeat, to the power hidden in frailest beauty, to that dignity in pain which accepts hurt but disdains to return it "

- (Macmillan and Co., 7s.6d. net) E.E.T.

19 November, 1921

### THE SATURDAY REVIEW

p588-589(W)

#### MOONSHINE FROM THE EAST

*The Fugitive*. Poems, By Sir Rabindranath Tagore Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.

*The Traveller's Tale*. By Clifford Bax. Oxford. Blackwell. 5s. net.

[only the relevant part of the review is reproduced]

MYSTICISM and the Orient have from long use become hazily synonymous in the popular mind. Any type of second-rate pseudo-metaphysics, particularly if tricked out in glib rhythms, can masquerade as "mysticism," just as any point all the way East, and a long way South, of the Ural

Mountains, is held to lie in that intensely psychic region, the "Orient." Now that all things oriental are deemed on that account to be mystical, we need a Nietzsche to prepare a new evaluation of values in the literatures of Eastern origin, when every platitude will lose its barrenness and every commonplace become pregnant with esoteric significance. It is not that writings of such poets as Tagore satisfy yearnings for a mysticism withheld by Occidental literature. Suggest to the yearners a stiff dose of Boehme or an evening with the 'Prophetic Books.' Conceive the horrified liftings of the whites of eyes. We are prepared sympathetically to consider that the word matters little compared with what lies behind the word; but accepting Tagore in this sense we have rarely encountered even one moment's flash of that astonishing vision which, like the Northern Lights, heaves and burns across the pages of William Blake; he leaves us fatigued therefore by an attitude more profitable in the solution of magazine problems than in the reading of his poetry. At times we cannot disguise our suspicion that the mystic, like one of Tagore's dream girls in his new collection of poems, 'The Fugitive,' is looking in our face and saying . . . "Nothing . . . nothing whatsoever."

Of course even nothing, said by Tagore, is sure to be said very smoothly, very felicitously; and his songs become a sort of ghost clad in rich and solid raiment, suggesting positively Defoe's delightful Mrs. Veal, who returning to the earth she had lately abandoned, almost allowed herself to accept a cup of tea.

You are the first break on the crest of heaven's slumber, Urvashi, you thrill the air with unrest. The world bathes your limbs in her tears; with colour of her heart's blood are your feet red; lightly you poise on the wave-tossed lotus of desire, Urvashi; you play for ever in that limitless mind wherein labours God's tumultuous dream.

It is the richness of this raiment which is the characteristic of Tagore; he scatters his metaphors with a lavish hand, unwilling that his humblest noun should go forth naked and unadorned. His technique, in fact, is simply an imaginative elaboration of metaphor; not utilized however to make

the picture more vivid to the eye, for his metaphors are associations rather than descriptions. Occasionally they reach beauty, but usually they slide like skating-beetles along the smooth levels of the obvious. ...

26 November, 1921

#### THE YORKSHIRE GAZETTE

p4c6(D)

[The same review published in Northern Echo on 18 November, 1921]

2 December, 1921

#### THE NORTHERN WHIG AND BELFAST POST

p9c2(D)

#### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S NEW VOLUME

THE FUGITIVE. By Rabindranath Tagore. London Macmillan and Co., St. Martin's Street

Rabindranath Tagore - it is understood that he prefers to be thus styled - has many English-speaking readers. He is one of the very few distinguished imaginative writers of Asiatic nationality whose works have attained a vogue in the West. How far he has been influenced by European literature is an interesting question. To the superficial reader the little dramas, or rather dialogues and prose poems - the term is an objectionable one, but there is no other that can well be substituted for it - in his new volume may seem to be entirely exotic products, yet credible that his studies in other literatures can have had no effect upon his own compositions. "The Fugitive" and many of the companion pieces seem to have more in common with the rhapsodies of Celtic authors than with anything else that is published in the Occident. One is more than faintly reminded of "Fiona Macleod" as one reads but the resemblance is confined to a very few passages - chiefly to those in which natural phenomena are drawn upon to illustrate the author's meaning. For one seldom is

permitted to escape from an atmosphere which is nothing if not tropical. "Ama and Vinayak" is more direct than the bulk of the contents of the volume. It is indeed, a very powerful miniature drama, dealing with the strong mutual antipathy between Mahomedans and Hindus. Ama, a Hindu woman, meets on a field of battle her father Vinayaka, who has slain her Moslem husband. The old man reproaches her; she glories in what he regards as her shame. Then comes her mother, Rama, who is more bitter against Ama than her father. The body of Jivaji, the young Hindu to whom she had been betrothed, and whom she jilted to marry the man of her choice, lies near. Rama points to it and bids Ama sacrifice herself according to the hideous Sutee rite. Vinayaka's heart softens; he speaks gently to his daughter - "Go back," he says, "to your son, to your own nest darkened with sorrow." But Rama is implacable. She declares that "a daughter's infamy stains her mother's honour," and calls on the soldiers who are at hand to "light the fire and surround the woman." In vain does Vinayaka bid the men to free Ama. Sullenly they murmur, "She is the widow of our master," and Rama scornfully bids them to "keep this old man under control!" And the poignant playlet ends with Ama's ringing challenge - "I defy you, mother! You soldiers I defy! for through death and love I win to freedom."

4 December, 1921

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

p9c2(S)

## TWO EASTERN SINGERS

**"The Fugitive". Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.)**

**"Selected Poems." Yone Noguchi. (Elkin Mathews. 12s.)**

These two volumes may well be read together. They are written by poets who have a singular mastery of the English tongue; one of them is a Bengali, the other a Japanese; they use different rhythms, and have different themes, but they are alike of the East, Eastern. No reader will fail to hear many unconscious echoes of poetry familiar in the West;

in the "Selected poems," for example, there is one, "O Hara San," which begins "It was many and many a year ago," and has lines like these:-

Oh, how the wind blew fanning me  
With a love that was more than earthly love  
In a garden of the cherry blossom  
Of a far-off tale you may know  
By the fairy name of Nippon.

No one can forget "Annabel Lee," which begins with the same line, and has some of the same rhythm. If one were to listen in English literature for the notes which are heard in Tagore, who is, of course, entirely independent and original, it would be wisest to return to Traherne, or, on some sides of her art, to Christina Rossetti. But this is only to say that there is no very precise boundary in poetry between East and West: there is something the poets share from whichever quarter they enter the Eastern City.

## Linking East and West

None the less, these poems are Eastern. The Japanese poet, who is also a professor of English Literature, has a valuable essay on the differences between Eastern and Western poetry. He claims Wordsworth as the first Easterner of English Literature; this can only be made good on one principle of selection; "his clear and guileless eyes went straight into the simplicity that joined the universe and himself into one." This is, indeed, true, but there he is far removed from pantheism of Japanese poets. And some of the distinctions claimed for Japanese poets seem to belong to the secret of all poetry. "When our great poets of Japan write only of a shiver of a tree or a flower, of a single isolated aspect of nature, that means that they are singing of infinity from its accidental revelation." This is finely said; and though they are always failing, they never desist from seeking. The poet, moreover, declares that "we should hope that the Western poets would forget their passion and intellect to advantage, and enter into the real poetical life born out of awakening from madness"; is probably the old difference at the root of it between the East and the West - between the life of contemplation and absorption in the East and the life of energy

and restless rebellion in the West. And in the end we may hope with this fine poet that there may come a time when, as another says -

East shall sit down with West  
and West with East

With the many exquisite pictures in the poems of Yone Noguchi it would be easily possible to fill many columns; one only can be given. The Japanese are great lovers of children, and they must have a place in their heart for cradle songs like this:

Sleep my love, your way of dream  
By the fireflies shall be lighted  
That I gather from the heart of night.  
Your father is off, good night.  
To buy the honey from the stars  
The city of stars is away a hundred miles.  
But by the dawn he will return  
Riding on the horse of the dawn,  
For you, with a dream as big as the sun

All the wonderful mystery of Japan is in the background of these gentle and pensive poems. "Mistborn Kyoto like a dream half-fading," the pagoda bells, the cherry blossoms the moo-lantern amid the westasia, and in such a haunted world the anger lost in reveries and reflecting upon the eternal mysteries.

### A Mystic World

In "The Fugitive" the lovers of Tagore will not be disappointed. He has all his powers still undimmed. Indeed the poet never, in our judgment, has surpassed this, his latest work. It is as all his poetry is most varied on theme and yet almost always in the same key. He, too, is Eastern in his manner of response to nature and to humanity and to God. Everywhere the reader is in the presence of a mystic world, with eternity in his heart. We can never read far in Tagore without coming upon the ford of a river and the boat crossing in the twilight; or upon the road or the mysterious house; it is a world of shadows, and at any turn there may open glimpses of the reality for which the Eastern seers for ever hunger. With one lyric we would leave this book, which will not be unworthy to stand with "Gitanjali":

Strange ways has my guest

He comes at times when I am unprepared, yet  
how can I refuse him?

I watch all night with lighted lamp, he stays away,  
when the light goes out and the room is bare he  
comes claiming his seat, and can I keep him waiting?

I laugh, and make merry with friends, then suddenly  
I start up, for lo! he passes me by in sorrow,  
and I know my mirth was vain. I have often been a  
smile in his eyes when my heart ached, then I knew  
my sorrow was not real.

Yet I never complain when I do not understand him

This is the pure mystic strain

E.S.

8 December, 1921

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p4c5(D)

### ORIENTAL PROSE-POETRY

"In the night the song came to me, but you were not there. It found the words for which I had been seeking all day. Yes, in the stillness a moment after dark they throbbed into music, even as the stars then began to pulse with light, but you were not there. My hope was to sing it to you in the morning, but try as I might, though the music came, the words hang back, when you were beside me."

This is a typical example of Rabindranath Tagore's style in "The Fugitive" (Macmillan; 7s. 6d.), or indeed one might say in any of his previous books, for Tagore has evidently realised that to be a success in England one must fix on a certain style and *never* vary it.

One may perhaps be pardoned for getting tired of this sort of thing, which anyone with an Oriental-poetical mind can do - and which, as a matter of fact, is becoming overdone. There is no doubt that Tagore does it very well, and that his first books, "Gitanjali" and "The Crescent Moon", were welcomed according to their deserts, and probably here are many readers who are quite ready for "more Tagore." but, for our own part, when we feel inclined for this kind of literature, we prefer the Psalms

of David; there is more dignity in them, less vagueness, and more rhythm.

many a joyous hour will be spent with the lilt and rhythm of these verses.

10 December, 1921

**LEYTONSTONE EXPRESS AND INDEPENDENT**

p6c3(W)

**THE FUGITIVE**

(Macmillan)

Literature has been greatly enriched by the works of Rabindranath Tagore and his latest contribution is of excellent standard. "The Fugitive" will be eagerly read by all lovers of poetry, and the lines will well repay them.

The wonderful imagery and ornate language of the East is well known, and it is brought to its fullest power and expression by this master.

Philosophy and wisdom is woven into the work. We will give two quotations as indicators of the nature of the poems.

"Love, in the centre of the circling war-dance of light and dark, yours is that green island, where the sun kisses the shy forest shade and silence is wooed by birds' singing"

In the prose poem "Kach and Devayani" - the latter, who is the daughter of Kach's instructor, falls in love with her father's pupil. When Kacha is about to return to paradise, he tells Devayani that his gratitude can never die.

Devayani replies:

"Gratitude! Forget all, Do you only remember benefits? Let them perish. If after the day's lesson in the evening solitude, some strange tremor of joy shook your heart, remember that - not gratitude. If, as someone passed, a snatch of song got tangled among your texts or the swing of a robe fluttered your studies with delight remember that. What! benefits only! And neither beauty nor love nor ...?"

We will leave the reader to discover the other gems that lie in profusion among the leaves, and

10 December, 1921

**THE NOTTINGHAM GAZETTE**

p2c5(D)

**MACMILLAN AND CO.**

A number of admirable gift books for adults are among Messers Macmillan's publications. Thus admirers of the Indian poet, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, will delight in "the Fugitive", characterised by music, allegory, and symbol of an alluring and haunting kind. (7s. 6d.). It is in the author's well-known free-verse style, a form which has been described as particularly suitable when the poet wishes to express his conceptions at their earliest and most charming stage. The volume comprises short drama, lyrics, and translations, all of which will delight those to whose the mystic strain makes appeal.

12 December, 1921

**THE WESTERN MORNING NEWS**

p2c6(D)

**THE POETRY OF PROSE**

The mystic, Oriental poetry of Sir Rabindranath Tagore has an ever increasing cult. His latest creation is a collection of stories and sketches in metrical prose and in the exalting language and sentiment which have made the poet's world famous. "The Fugitive" (Macmillan and Co. 7s. 6d.) reveals something of the wonder faith and transcendental morality of India and the East. No one can absorb it without realising that the ethereal virtues and conception are tawdry and new. They are born in the realms of vastness and awe. In the songs of Janadas the poet asks the bird why it sings only to the boundless sky, and not in the nest where all its pleasure is stores. And the messenger of the heavens answers "While I rested within bounds I was content. But when I soared into vastness I found I could sing".

14 December, 1921

**THE GLASGOW EVENING TIMES**

p3c3(DE)

**Section: BOOKS OF TO-DAY**

**Dusted with Gold**

"Our life sails on the uncrossed sea, whose waves chase each other in an eternal hide and seek

"It is the restless sea of change, feeding its foaming flocks, to lose them over and over again, beating its hands against the calm of the sky

"Love, in the centre of this circling war dance of light and dark, yours is that great island, where the sun kisses the sly forest shade and silence is wooed by birds' singing"

Here is one of the themes, and one of the most clearly defined, of "the Fugitive" (Macmillan), the latest prose poem of that great Indian, Rabindranath Tagore. Not merely clothed in gemmy language, but having its being in choice words and sought-out phrases, the Fugitive's soul is a cycle of poetic thoughts to the technique of the poet's words as ether is to matter. To declare arbitrarily that any passage typifies the whole poem is as superficial as an attempt to label by a stock phrase the subject of the poem. There are lyrics, translations, episodes as intensely dramatic as a Hardy or a Browning poem, visions as suggestive of eternity as a haikai. They are beautiful by themselves; but infinitely more beautiful in their setting. Their content is a whole fabric as satisfying as an Eastern rug, and, like such a rug, leaving something, not imperfect but incomplete. And perhaps for the same reason. For the wistfulness of the poet never grasps the realisation of its own desire.

There may be a woman in the case, as there is in the poem, or as in the poem, the woman may be the symbol, always feminine, always elusive of the unattainable desire; no, not unattainable, but when grasped it always has less body than it promised. Tagore is a tender lover. He touches with mysterious cloudy gold whatever he loves; and he is a great lover, a capacious lover, and a true man; but always he searches out the simple truth and idealises his desires. And since the days when his child poem, "The Crescent Moon," etherealised

for youthful Indians and the rest of us that mysterious wonder and serious play of childhood which R.L.S. chanted in his "Child's Garden of Verses," he has continued to wonder at the beauty and longing and wisdom of childhood. And he reads in childhood the type of the human race, the child of sad, beautiful, incomplete but desirable nature. So, to the poet, the idea of an apparently little thing is often more valuable and more eloquent than much fine gold

**W.J.W.**

17 December, 1921

**THE INQUIRER**

p702(W)

**Thompson (E.J.) RABINDRANATH TAGORE;**  
**Oxford University Press. 112 pp., 2s. 6d.**

This handy volume in the 'Heritage of India' series, should be carefully noted. Tagore's peculiar genius can not be appreciated in all its variety, strength and weakness apart from the story of his life. The author, who is the principal of the Wesleyan College, Bankura, shows himself an unusually enlightened student of the man and his writings; and, while evidently approaching the subject from a Christian point of view, he is broad in sympathies and understanding. To those of us who have special interest in the Brahma Somaj movement the book is valuable and highly illustrative. An excellent portrait is given

17 December, 1921

**THE NATION AND THE ATHENAEUM**

p472(W)

**AN AMERICAN LETTER**

[Only the first four paragraphs are cited]

Now that the lecture season is at hand one looks around to discover what European celebrities the Bureaus have captured for the season 1921-2. So far, no outstanding personality has been announced,

that Maximilain Harden is coming is rumoured and denied. Strauss is coming, but Strauss, of course, is for concert hall and not for the lecture platform.

It is curious how few European lecturers leave a good memory behind them – how few of them would meet with a response upon a return visit. I say this without reference to the distinguished lecturers who were here last year and year before – G.K. Chesterton, Rabindranath Tagore, W.B. Yeats, and Lord Dunsany. In the short space of their visit, I think, they do not come to understand the terms on which they are received. Why do a thousand people in half a hundred cities come to hear me? The European lecturer asks himself. He either makes up his mind that what he has to say is tremendously important, or else that the American audience is ready to be uncritically appreciative of the European show has something to tell them. If he takes either point of view he misses the mark. The American audience does not like to be talked to by a person with a superiority complex, and it is not at all uncritically appreciative.

The first thing to understand about the public that the European lecturer comes into touch with is that it has an intellectual humility – I cannot believe that any other people have this rare and beautiful trait to anything like the same extent as the Americans have it. With their intellectual humility, however, there goes a real criticism: the women and men who go to hear the European celebrity in the mid-Western city with the outlandish name are excellent judges of what constitutes a lecture. They have heard a diversity of lecturers. The men know how to speak in the Chamber of Commerce and in the Rotary Club; the women know how to address their own busy and excellently run organizations. Such people know whether one can or cannot lecture, or whether one has or has not a lecture to give. They listen and they take in what is said – that is where their intellectual humility is evident, but they have made their judgments.

There is one thing, unfortunately, that is likely to make the American public unsympathetic to a European lecturer – that is the suggestion that he favours some cause not popular in the newspapers. Americans are timid about causes. Last year Rabindranath Tagore did not come anywhere near making the success that the memory of his previous visit show have helped to bring him. This was

because he was supposed to advocate – not in public – Indian independence. Let not the Britisher suppose that this amounts to evidence of American friendship for the British Empire! If it had been suggested that Tagore advocated freedom for the Moors the suggestion would have had something of the same effect. Americans are instinctively against any sort of overturn. Their own state was founded on revolution and their own heroic memories go back to revolution, but they are last people in the world to take kindly to the idea of political or social struggle. . .

**PADRAIC COLUM**

*24 December, 1921*

**EXPRESS AND STAR**

p2c5(D)

## **MUSIC ON THE BREEZE**

### **THE MESSAGE OF THE "COMING OF THE CHILD"**

There is nothing about Christmas in Rabindranath Tagore's new book, "The Fugitive", published by Macmillan and Co., but one finds in it many lovely passages that have that sense of childlike wonderment, and worshipful humility in the presence of mystical verities, which is never more common currency than at this season of the year. Tagore is a polished artificer of words, whose thumbnail sketches of episodes and personalities are delicately vivid. His studies in thought processes are luminous with passionate idealism and the passing phases of the casual hours. The penurious pathos of the wayside beggar, the fettered aspirations of the soil-tiller, the meagre ambit of soul of the pursuer of self, the futility of temple-building in lieu of cultivating the homely graces, the folly of the intellectual luxuriance that saps the vitality of spiritual vision – on such everlasting themes does Tagore allow his myriad-windowed imagination to play. His thoughts are recorded in phrases of beauty and parables of choicest structure.

On the eve of the celebration of the Coming of the Child we turn to Tagore's parable of Mind and the New Life.

Mind busied himself with gathering things and building towers. Wing after wing was added to his palace in the effort to create the wonderful and the great. As the days passed more wings were added to the palace, and more lands to his domain. One day there was music in the breeze, and a tramp, who walked the hard road, said it was "the Music of the Coming." Mind shook his head in doubt, for there were neither banners nor pageantry. The herald arrived, and Mind was confused, for the dome of his building was not yet finished, and nothing was in order. "Pull down your building," said the herald, "because to-day is the day of Coming, and your building is in the way." The lofty building was scattered to the dust, and lo! there came a child running laughing from its mother's arms into the open light. Was it only for a child that they said it was the day of the Coming? Was it for this that all the word was claimed?

"Yes," was the answer. "Mind, you build walls to imprison yourself. Your servants toil to enslave themselves, but the whole earth and infinite space for the Child, for the New Life."

The Child brings hope for all the world, and joy, and what Mind in all its cleverness cannot give, the childlike spirit of love, sacrifice, and pure sincerity can do – can bring to pass the New Life, the New Age

M.W.

28 December, 1921

### THE WOLVERHAMPTON CHRONICLE

p3(W)

[The same review entitled "Music on the Breeze" in EXPRESS AND STAR (24 December, 1921) has been published here.]

29 December, 1921

### THE NEAR EAST AND INDIA

p839(W)

### PANTHEISTIC POETRY

"THE FUGITIVE". By Rabindranath Tagore (London: Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.).

This new volume of work by the eminent Bengali poet contains reflections, impressions and descriptions given in short paragraphs in prose poetry of the type familiar to his many admirers. There are also some episodes in dramatic form and some translations of Indian poetry. The number of this author's ardent admirers is, of course very great. At present, we learn, his writings are tremendously popular in Germany, where bookshops are full of volumes of his works.

After reading "The Fugitive" we find ourselves thinking that the author's questions "I was speaking to you, my love, with mind barely conscious of my voice – tell me, had it any meaning? Did it bring you any message from beyond life's borders?"

could be aptly addressed to the reader, and that in that case the answer would be "not always". There are passages which do convey an image and an idea, but a great deal of it passes by in rhythmic monotony, leaving no impression and in the end produces an uneasy feeling that the poet might, out of habit, go on tunelessly uttering the most trivial common-place and platitudes, and that it would all sound just the same. In fact we have sometimes the sensation of reading a parody. We cannot doubt however, that although he appears too often to lose himself in a haze of words when he has nothing much to say, Tagore is a poet, and is haunted and obsessed by beauty and the mystery of life, and is reaching out to find words to convey his intense realization of "Beauty that must die and joy whose hand is ever at his lips bidding adieu." He himself describes this straining pursuit after the glimpsed, fugitive forms of love and beauty when he says: "words in the agony of their vagueness, haunt my mind, like vagrant clouds hovering hills, waiting for some chance wind to relieve them of their rain."

1922

10 January, 1922

PALL MALL GAZETTE

p15c5,DE

Section: RECENT VERSE

**"The Fugitive" by SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan and Co.) 7s. 6d. net.**

Here is another volume to be added to the already long list for which the celebrated author of "Gitanjali" is responsible. "The Fugitive" is a collection of what, for want of a better word, one must write down in the mass, as "Poems in prose", though here and there we find the dialogue form. For exquisite word-weaving, for rhythm, beautiful cadences, poetic imagery and simile, one offers one's tribute to admiration to Sir Rabindranath Tagore, though perhaps on Western ears the following strikes a little crudely.

Do not shun the garden of Lost Hearts waiting  
at the end of the wrong road

When one comes to ask what gift of philosophic teaching, as apart from aesthetic pleasure, this highly cultured writer has to offer to Western reader, the answer cannot, I think, be so whole heartedly eulogistic. Not that this matters. Those who worship Tagore and all we call the "wisdom of the East" will find their satisfying meaning here; or some may even say that they ask for no teaching in work which must be judged purely aesthetically.

To what heaven, I wonder, have they carried in  
their flower-baskets those days that tangled to the  
lyrics of the King's poet?

This morning, separation from those I was born  
too late to meet weighs on and saddens my heart.

A strong, simple philosophy hardly flowers in  
two such consecutive paragraphs.

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14 January, 1922

THE NEW STATESMAN

p425(W)

THE REAL TAGORE

**Rabindranath Tagore. By E.J. THOMPSON. Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d.**

**Greater India. By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Madras: S. Ganesan. 6s.**

It is hardly, perhaps, to a semi-missionary series labelled "The Heritage of India" that the English reader would go with the expectation of coming upon a thoroughly sound monograph on Tagore. But if he should think so he would be wrong. Mr. E. J. Thompson, Principal of the Wesleyan College, Bankura, in Bengal, has done what was needed, and done it with knowledge and skill. Into one hundred pages he has condensed an account of Tagore's career, full of fresh detail, and a review of his extraordinary literary output. He has read Tagore in Bengali - though not, he confesses, all of him (no one has done that). Unlike, therefore, the many persons who in Europe and America have endeavoured to expound Tagore, he knows his subject almost in its entirety.

Apart from the question of Tagore's place among imaginative writers, there are at least three discussable aspects of him. These are the profession and range of his creative gift, his place in contemporary India as a poetic and intellectual force, and his contribution as a practical citizen - politician, social reformer, and builder of a new school for Indian boys. In discussing these things Mr. Thompson displays a refreshing competence and vigour.

Notwithstanding his old-bardic presence and prose, Tagore has only just turned threescore. Yet his literary life covers forty-five years, and, says Mr. Thompson, there is no modern European writer of repute who by comparison is not frugal in creation. The chief value of this volume is that it describes the character and range of this astonishing yield: lyric, drama, and allegory, novels and short stories, philosophy and theology, social and ethical theory and precept, criticism, educational discussion, political evangelism, satire and *genre* writing - in short, as almost unbounded flood of self-express-

sion. One material fact insisted upon and deplored by Mr. Thompson is that the English and the other translations do the poet a definite injustice, and that he himself must take a good part of the blame. For some reason not easy to understand, he has encouraged his European admirers in their practice of exploiting him as a writer and dreamer of a single attitude and mood - the wistful-reflective-mystical mood - whereas his importance lies in his energetic variety and vivid response to the life of the world. The second point is even more interesting. Tagore is a challenging experimentalist. Alike in matter and in form he has been an innovator, and in nothing so much as in the adventurous freedom with which he has used his mother-tongue. Though a man of fine and copious scholarship, he has outraged the scholars of the Sanskrit tradition, and Mr. Thompson gives some delightful illustrations of his prolonged conflict with the pundits. Not until the West had crowned him did they cease to oppose the grant to him of University honours, and he has lain under the ban because, in defiance of all rules, he dared to employ under the current vernacular in lyric verse as well as prose.

Not the least discerning of Mr. Thompson's pages are those in which he considers Tagore as political thinker and prophet. In the first flush of the nationalist movement provoked by the Curzon policy (1904-6), Tagore came out as leader of the young intellectuals in Bengal; and a most extraordinary figure he was. His addresses were listened to with rapture, and read and quoted with the greatest fervour. They dealt with a situation which, so far as the educated classes are concerned, has long since been transcended. But they make uncommonly good reading still, as the selection brought together in *Greater India* will suffice to show. Always in certain respects anti-European, Tagore was at that time an impassioned Indian Sinn Feiner. On certain essential points he has since changed his view, but neither then nor at any other stage has he been a Non-co-operator. East and West, indeed, could hardly be more completely blended than they are in him. Hence the intensity of his protest against M.K. Gandhi who by his reputation of Europe would make India into a prison.

25 January, 1922

**LIVERPOOL DAILY POST AND MERCURY**  
p7c2-3(D)

Rabindranath Tagore's "The Fugitive" (Macmillan 7s. 6d.) is a series of prose-poems, dramatic sketches, and translation by Indian mystic. The clue to the title is given in the opening passage:

"Darkly you sweep on, Eternal Fugitive, round whose bodiless rush stagnant space frets into eddying bubbles of light" It is a little difficult to discover to what extent the thought of the various poems is intended to be continuous, and what precisely is the significance of the passages which are prime facile love-poems. The book is very curiously arranged. The sections headed "The Fugitive" recur at intervals. Interspersed among them are a number of short dramatic episodes and passages labelled "translations". Tagore's prose-poetry is never quite English. Its expression is often very beautiful, but he lacks just a sense of the finest English form and rhythm. His rhythm is too often prosaic, where his thought is poetic. That makes for a certain incongruity. But that he is a thinker of the subtlest order, few will be able to deny after reading this volume.

28 January, 1922

**THE OUTLOOK**  
p76(W)

#### Section: SHORT NOTICES

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** By E.J. Thompson (*The Heritage of India Series*) Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d.

"These verses will not lie in little well printed books upon ladies' tables, who turn the pages with indolent hands that may sigh over a life without meaning, which is yet all they can know of life." So wrote Mr. Yeats in his introduction to "Gitanjali". Yet as Mr. E.J. Thompson truly points out, "this fate was exactly the one which overcame the poet's work." Tagore, for most Englishmen, too invertebrate to be lastingly satisfying; and the poet himself, in his translations and lectures, has done

himself the injustice to exploit this aspect almost exclusively. Of the Tagore of Hugo-like versatility, the writer of drama, tragic, symbolical, comic, farcical; of poetry, reflective, religious, elegiac, lyrical; of novels, short-stories, essays, sermons, criticism, and songs (of which he has written some fifteen hundred) England knows little. We cannot imagine a better introduction to the true Tagore than Mr. Thompson's sane and excellently written little book. Mr. Thompson is familiar with Tagore's poetry in the original Bengali, and we are willing to take his work for its greatness. Unfortunately poetry is always untranslatable, though it may be remade into other poetry; and Tagore is never quite a poet when he writes in English. But that Mr. Thompson himself if, he has proved by his transformation of Tagore's *Happiness* into a beautiful English poem. We look forward with interest to his forthcoming book on poetry of Rabindranath Tagore.

13 February, 1922

**THE ABERDEEN DAILY JOURNAL**  
p2(4,D)

## TAGORE'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE : HIS LIFE AND WORK.

By E.J. Thompson. B.A., Principal, Wesleyan College, Bankura, Oxford University Press. 2/6.

Mr. Thompson's volume in the "Heritage of India" series is in every way deserving of the attention of the admirers of Tagore. Mr. Thompson writes with intimate knowledge and sympathetic acumen, compressing a vast amount of material and comment into the hundred odd pages of his book. While the facts of Rabindranath Tagore's life are exceedingly important in their influence on his writings, and especially on his poetry, the chief service Mr. Thompson has done is to explode the theory widely held in this country that the Bengali poet is a mystic. Tagore has all the "spiritual depth and splendour of the East," but to define him as a mystic is to misunderstand and obscure him. Among other noteworthy points in Mr. Thompson's study are his

analysis of Tagore's English style, and his revelation of the manner in which the poet inadequately rendered his Bengali poems into English by changing them from full-length imaginative pictures into mere wisps of song. A comparison, exceedingly striking, is afforded by the juxtaposition of one of Tagore's own Gitanjali "translations" with a full translation by Mr. Thompson of the original Bengali poem. Tagore's part and position in the Indian Nationalist movement are also closely defined. "Much of what is independent and not little of what the authorities have found most troublesome, in recent Indian political thought, owes its spring to Rabindranath's teaching. He is the parent of many movements which to-day he disowns."

The book is divided into two parts, "Life" and "Work", each again sub-divided, the former into sections on his early and later life, the second into "The Poet and Creative artist" and "The Reformer and Seer". In the "Work" part there are many delicate English versions of Tagore's poems and a nice critical insight: and, judged from the complete book Mr. Thompson is to be complimented in providing English readers with a life-like and impressive study of a great, if to us exotic, modern writer.

25 February, 1922

**THE NATION AND THE ATHENAEUM**  
p804(VV)

**Rabindranath Tagore. By E. J. THOMPSON.**  
(Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d.)

The fortune of Dr. Tagore in Europe has been more curious than that of any other prominent man of letters who could be named. He sprang into fame by virtue of a single volume in translation, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize on practically the same basis, plus the echo of his renown in India. His books and his career have provided material for a mass of English writing; and yet not one of his European commentators hitherto has been able to read him in the original, or possessed any reasonably full qualification for judging either his work or his influence. Mr. Thompson suffers from no such disability. He knows the astonishing *corpus* of Tagore's work in Bengali, and he has applied this

reading to the making of a capital little book, which we do not hesitate to commend as the best informed, the brightest, and the most illuminating exposition of a great Indian that has been presented to the English public in our day. Mr. Thompson is head of the Wesleyan College at Bankura, Bengal; but no reader could guess that there was any barrier of race or creed between him and his subject. His summary of Tagore's work is excellent in its brevity and concreteness, while with no more than a suggestion of extravagant praise, he is able to make the English reader understand the main things about Tagore: his fecundity and versatility; his varied appeal and influence as poet, teacher, and critic; and the singularity of his position in relation to the traditional life and scholarship of his province. A success for this sensible and knowledgeable little book is certainly something to wish for, in the interests alike of India, of historical accuracy, and of the continually increasing public which finds a large part of its intellectual nourishment in the thought and imagination of India.

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1 March, 1922

**THE DAILY NEWS**

p7c5(D)

#### Section: NEWS OF BOOKS

##### Tagore as Essayist.

The Macmillans publish Sir Rabindranath Tagore's books in English, and they announce a new volume of essays by him, "Creative Unity". Within recent years he has given us quite a handful of books, and this causes some people to say, "But how hard he must work." The fact is, of course, that he was already a famous and voluminous Indian writer before he passed into English. Thus, he has only had to draw for us on the best he had given, to Bengali literature usually he has made the translations himself, and he was always gone over them, for Tagore's command of our tongue is perfect and pure.

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13 March, 1922

**THE DAILY MAIL**

p4c3(D)

#### BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS

##### THIRTY U.S. AUTHORS ON THEIR COUNTRY EAST AND WEST By THE REVIEWERS

[Only the relevant part is cited here]

##### A POET-SEER

Wherever one may go on the Continent one sees in the booksellers' shops rows of books by Rabindranath Tagore. When one talks to the readers of these books one finds that they regard the author as a prophet, a philosopher, a poet-seer.

They find in his writings, just the same vague dissatisfaction with the world of to-day as they feel themselves, just the same revolt against materialism and money-getting which stirs in their minds, just the same reaching out towards a wider, fuller life, and a more real human brotherhood that they confess.

Tagore is a happy product of Western intellectual culture working upon Eastern mystics. He is exceptional. Most Indians, he deplures, in his latest work, "Creative Unity" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), are injured by the spirit of the West.

I have realised it myself in the little boys of my own school. For the first few years there is not trouble. But as soon as the upper class is reached their worldly wisdom - the malady of the aged - begins to assert itself. They rebelliously insist that they must no longer learn, but rather pass examinations.

Yet he does not deny the "true greatness" of the West, which it owes "not so much to its marvellous training of intellect as to its spirit of service devoted to the welfare of man." Therefore, he regrets all the more that the Western mind seems "everywhere to be raising thorny hedges of exclusion and offering human sacrifices to national self-seeking."

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13 March, 1922

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c2(D)

**AN INDIAN THINKER**

**CREATIVE UNITY.** By Rabindranath Tagore, 7s. 6d. net. London: Macmillan.

Indian culture has had characteristic traits of its own from immemorial times. Its aspects at the opening of the twentieth century are attracting renewed attention among observers, free from such prejudices as find their broadest expression in the outworn epithet that calls the east unchanging. No books written in English are more trustworthy guides in this fascinating field of inquiry than the writings of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, whose poetry and whose prose alike throw a light peculiarly their own on the problems raised by the presence of the Western people in the East. His new volume is a collection of ten thoughtful papers, carried in subject, but animated by a common purpose, the dissipation of the misunderstandings that have so often kept East and West apart in apparently hopeless contradictions and recriminations. The first discusses "The Poet's Religion" as a system of belief which has this advantage over sectarian creeds, that it is "fluid" and it is interesting especially in its comments on Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty." The second treats of "The Creative Ideal", explaining the "proportions" which, in the aesthetic and in the logic of old Sanskrit books, exclude the assertion of absolute separateness as rebellion. A paper on "The Religion of the Forest" touches on nature worship, and says pointed things about Milton as well as about Shakespeare. Another draws an instructive contrast between the faith of a popular religious sect of Bengal, the "Baul," and the general teaching of Buddha on "The profound peace of self-renunciation." Among the rest are one on "The Modern Age" which describes Calcutta as an upstart town with no depth of sentiment in her face and in her manners, not without a river to "give her the sacred baptism of beauty," but "surrendered body and soul to her wealthy paramour, the spirit of the ledger, bound in dead leather," and one on "The Spirit

of Freedom," which exhorts its writer's fellow-countrymen to ask themselves if the freedom to which they aspire is one of external conditions. Not the least interesting of the essays broadly sketches the plan of an Eastern University which will invite students from the West to study the different systems of Indian philosophy, literature, art, and music in their proper environment; and which will have for its larger object to reveal to the world the Eastern mind as displayed in the whole range of Eastern cultures the Aryan, Semitic, Mongolian and others. The fundamental note that resounds through all the book is best indicated in the closing sentence of the writer's brief introduction - "To give perfect expression to the One, the Infinite through the harmony of the many, to the One, the Love, through the sacrifice of self, is the object alike of our individual life and our society."

16 March, 1922

**THE DAILY CHRONICLE**

p4c2(D)

**Section: BOOKS OF THE DAY**

It is a pity that Rabindranath Tagore's new volume, "Creative Unity" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) was not given a more inviting title, for it is a wise and exhilarating collection of essays centring about the idea of joy in our personality arising from a consciousness of a spirit of unity within ourselves

Whether this spirit can be evoked by the circumstances of our life or whether it is a light kindled at our birth is a question we do not discuss, but the Indian poet utters a truth that is worth realising when he tells us that joy is the outcome of detachment from self and lives in the door to joy, and the expression of joy is always creative. In other words the men and women who really make the world tolerable for humanity are those who have released their spirit from the tyranny of their Self. To include this truth in the philosophy of one's life is a inestimable importance, and the illustration of itself makes "Creative Unity" worth reading not once, but many times.

21 March, 1922

**THE BIRMINGHAM POST**

p10c5(D)

**A VOICE FROM THE EAST**

"The wriggling tentacles of a cold-blooded utilitarianism, with which the West has grasped all the easily yielding succulent portions of the East, are causing pain and indignation throughout the Eastern countries. The West comes to us, not with the imagination and sympathy that create and unite, but with a shock of passion — passion for power and wealth. This passion is a mere force, which has in it the principle of separation, of conflict." So writes Sir Rabindranath Tagore in one of the essays collected in his new book, "Creative Unity" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net). The particular essay from which the excerpt is taken, is entitled "East and West." With two or three other essays, notably "The Modern Age" and "The Nation," it expresses the author's dissatisfaction with Western civilization — a purpose of the volume as a whole. That purpose is to make very clear the spirituality of the East and the present materialism of the West. "It does not hurt my pride," writes Sir Rabindranath, "to acknowledge that in the present age, Western humanity has received its mission to be the teacher of the world; that her science through the mastery of laws of nature, is to liberate souls from the dark dungeon of matter." But for this very reason he has realised all the more strongly, on the other hand, that "the dominant collective idea in the Western countries is not creative. It is wholly wanting in spiritual power to blend and harmonise, it lacks the sense of the great personality of man." Sir Rabindranath is a poet. The essays in the book are divisible into two categories, but there is much even in those which raise broad political issues that the average Western politician may not easily understand. But if he cannot apprehend or appreciate the causes of Eastern distrust — and even disdain — of the West, he can perhaps understand the assertion that the more success the collective power which is guiding the helm of Western civilisation has brought to Europe "the more costly it will prove to her at loss, when the accounts have to be rendered."

And the signs are unmistakable that the accounts have been called for. The time has come when Europe

must know that the forcible parasitism which she has been practising upon the two large Continents of the world — the two most unwidely whales of humanity — must be causing to her moral nature a gradual atrophy and degeneration

After all, Tagore reminds us, man is a spiritual being and "not mere living money-bag jumping from profit to profit, and breaking the backbone of human race in its financial leapfrog."

Such, however has been the condition of things for more than a century, and to-day, trying to read the future by the light of the European configuration, we are asking ourselves everywhere in the East "Is this frightfully overgrown power really great? It can braise us from without, but can it add to our wealth of spirit? It can sign peace treaties, but can it give peace?"

There is much more in this book that will be unpalatable to the politicians — if they trouble to read it or can pass beyond the first ninety pages, which contain essays respectively entitled "The Poet's religion," "The Creative Ideal," "The religion of the Forest," and "An Indian Folk religion." Each of these is a definite contribution to the complete purpose of the volume, but if they touch the transcendental there is at any rate no obscurity in this passage from the essay on "the Modern Age."

Politicians calculate upon the number of maled hands that are kept on the sword hilts, they do not possess the third eye to see the great invisible hand that clasps in silence the hand of the helpless and wits its time. The strong form their league by a combination of powers, driving the weak to form their own league along with their God. I know I am crying in the wilderness when I raise the voice of warning, and while the West is busy with its organisation of a machine-made peace it will still continue to nourish by its iniquities the underground forces of earthquake in the Eastern Continent. The West seems unconscious that science, by providing it with more and more power, is tempting it to suicide and encouraging it to accept the challenge of the disarmed, it does not know that the challenge comes from a higher source.

Throughout all that is written in this book run the idea that not only are the East and the West

necessary to each other, not only has each something to give the other, but that nationalism - the ideal of the nation - must give way to another ideal. Since "our moral ideals do not work with chisels and hammers", this new ideal will best be expressed not by an institution, but by the individual all over the world "who think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth." The problem now before humanity "is of one single country, which is this earth, where the races as individuals must find both their freedom of self-expression and their bond of federation. Mankind must realise a unity, wider in range, deeper in sentiment, stronger in power than ever before." As a first step towards this realisation opportunities must be created for revealing the different peoples to one another. There must be some meeting ground where there can be no question of conflicting interests. And one of such places Sir Rabindranath finds in the university. In his own school in Bengal he has aimed at forming the nucleus of an International University in India as open of the best means of promoting mutual understanding between the East and the West. But this is to be no university run on the lines of the "artificial method of training specially calculated to produce the carriers of the white man's burden."

India has her renaissance, and to his International University the great poet of Bengal proposes to invite student from the West to study the Indian systems of philosophy, literature, art, and music, in their proper environment and to encourage them to undertake research in collaboration with scholars already engaged in this work. Like some other people, Sir Rabindranath is dissatisfied with the results of Western education in India, and in the university of his own model - extended until it comprehends the whole range of Eastern cultures - the Eastern mind would be revealed to the world. But his centre of culture is to be a centre also of his country's economic life, providing a practical industrial training, "whose motive force is not the greed of profit." Plainly, there is some affinity between this outcome of the Bengali poet's thinking and ideas that are spreading through India from other source.

28 March, 1922

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p6c2(D)

### **TAGORE'S NEW ESSAYS**

CREATIVE UNITY. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp. vii. 203. 7s. 6d net

The popularity of Rabindranath Tagore in this country has never reached the amazing measure accorded to him in central Europe since his lecture-tour through Germany a year ago. Nor is it easy for us to explain why a people who normally breathe the air that more than once has nurtured philosophical greatness can be stirred to wild enthusiasm for what as its very best must be regarded as little else than a poetical presentment of doctrines already restated in terms of European thought. There is a hybrid type of reader, as we all know, which is likely to be drawn, mothlike, but the glamour of artistry in philosophical affairs without flapping a wing for philosophy itself. This may account for a normal amount of interest and even excitement, but it will not explain away what is literally a craze. Only if Rabindranath Tagore's new volume, the twentieth in his English edition, can be taken as fairly summarising the opinions he expressed in public have we a plausible theory to our hand. "Creative Unity" is a collection of ten essays or lectures on subjects ranging from Indian folk-religions to woman and the home, from an eastern university to the idea of the nation. The response of Middle Europe to Rabindranath Tagore on contemporary social and national problems represents the first stirring of a stunned and broken people after the debacle. It is wine and sunlight to them at this stage to be succoured with words which tell of "this aberration of a people decked with the showy title of 'patriotism,' proudly walking abroad phasing itself off as highly moral influence." They hear how "the inflammatory contagion has spread all over the world, proclaiming its fever flush to be the best sign of health," and that "it is causing in the hearts of peoples naturally inoffensive a feeling of envy at not having their temperature as high as that of their delicious neighbours and not being able to cause as much mischief, but merely having to suffer from it." But it is not Tagore's fault that only

one side of the truth of his message can humanely be accepted just now.

He denounces the modern system of nation and Government as a deadening, soul-destroying influence leading always to chaos, and it takes more than ordinary readers to subscribe to the condemnation unless it stops at the nations and Governments outside their own. Among much that Nietzsche said more lyrically and Tolstoy more bluntly "Creative Unity" contains many wise and arresting statements, and the advocates of what is known here as "regionalism" will welcome his recognition of the dangers which attend the concentration of great masses of men and wealth into the restricted areas of cities. There is real beauty in Tagore's attitude to women, although the limitation of his thought in most matters is well shown where he declares that he does not put his faith in any new institution, but "in the individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth." Our moral ideals, he adds, "do not work with chisels and hammers. Like trees they spread their roots in the soil and their branches in the sky, without consulting any architect for their plans."

T.M.

1 April, 1922

### THE INQUIRER

p198(W)

**Tagore (Rabindranath). CREATIVE UNITY. Macmillan. 203pp., 7s. 6d.**

This is a good book and should be read. Dr. Tagore is a poet, philosopher and social reformer in one; and, if we may say so, he here gives reassurance, by this many shrewd and common sense sayings, that the Indian mind is fully capable of ranging alongside of English minds and taking practical counsel on the problem which affect us all and especially us fellow-citizens of the same Empire. We imagine no candid reader of his page will lightly subscribe again to Mr. Kipling's facile "never the twain shall meet"; his chapter on "East and West",

brief as it is, renders all that sort of thing absurd "No doubt there are vast differences between the 'the twain'"; Dr. Tagore illustrates some of them in his sketches of Indian thought and literature, but his sympathetic and penetrative insight into the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley - to go no further - shows that a good many of us yet learn a great deal about ourselves, as well as our literature under such an interpreter

1 April, 1922

### THE SATURDAY REVIEW

p343-344(W)

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF TAGORE

**Creative Unity. By Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.**

It would not be fanciful to perceive in prose the separate language of nations and in poetry the joint language of humanity. The earliest speech had the rhythm and fundamental simplicity of poetry; only as speech developed and was distributed over the tracts of the world did it attain the idiosyncrasies of prose both in manner and material. That is why the translation of poetry is a mistake. Translated, it retains a certain documentary value, but what it possessed of universal value the language it is translated into either already possess or is not yet ripe for. Correspondingly we find more value in Sir Rabindranath Tagore's new volume of collected prose essays than in all the volumes of his poetry. His prose clearly and beautifully renders for us the specific philosophies of the great races for whom he is the spokesman, his poetry enables us to see through a glass darkly what has already, ever since our own Romantic Movement began, been vouchsafed to us in clear light by English poet after poet.

The very quality of his prose (whether first written in English or translated, as his poetry invariably is, by himself) has a real freshness and masculinity.

The bare facts about April are alternate sunshine and showers, but subtle blending of shadows

and lights of murmurs and movements, in April, give us not mere shocks of sensation, but unity of joy, as does music.

But the importance of these essays is far more than stylistic. They are the interpretation of an alien and antique philosophy by one who deeply understands the processes of our own mind. The aloofness of the Oriental enables him to solve the problem of the artist's attitude to his art in a manner we, blinded by the mists of our own energy, are not capable of. "The subject of art," he declares, "is the material wealth for the sake of which poetry should never be tempted to barter her soul, even though the temptation should come in the name and shape of public good or some usefulness." For between the artist and his art must be that perfect detachment which is "the pure medium of love."

To Tagore, the history of the Northmen of Europe is resonant with the clamours of sea and land; the sea "was the challenge of untamed nature to the indomitable human soul." Thus the European Dualism was established which stands so clearly contrasted with the Monism of India, that vast country where the long level tracts established no barrier between the life of men and the life that permeates the universe. In Shakespeare, the essential European among writers, nature is either hostile and monstrous, or, more usually, a decorative distraction from the frivolities of courts, a background for the serenading of high-born lovers. Milton emphasizes the arrogant sectarianism of man as conceived by the Western mind. In proud bower of our first parent.

Bird, beast, insect or worm

Durst enter none, such was their awe of man.

It was the philosophy of India, newly discovered in Germany, and travelling thence to all the poetries of Europe, that turned Wordsworth and Shelley to a profounder wisdom.

At a time when the futures of our own country and of India depend so largely on a clear mutual understanding, let at least the artists and philosophers begin to understand, in the hope that the politicians may follow after. Least of all will Tagore tolerate the Western misconception

of Buddhism, which is not, he declares with gravity and eloquence, a mere moral code leading to the path of extinction. "The religious enthusiasm which cannot be bound within any daily ritual, but overflows into adventures of love and beneficence, must have in its centre that element of personality which rouses the whole soul." With a beautiful and memorable symbol, "The oil has to be burnt," he declares, "not for the purpose of diminishing it, but for the purpose of giving light to the lamp."

Educationists will find of the greatest interest Tagore's proposals for the foundation of an Indian University, to be based upon a school already founded by himself in Bengal. It is to achieve through learning the harmony of India in a manner which recalls the proposals for the harmony of Europe formulated by Mr. Benchara Branford in his 'Janus and Vesta.' The arts and cultures of India are to be co-ordinated with the sciences of the West. But this is not all. The students, after the fashion of the old *taporanas*, or forest schools, are to combine with the villages surrounding the University in the cultivation of land, the breeding of sheep, the pressing of oil from oil-seeds. Here is neither the time nor the place to consider the feasibility of Otis suggestion. We can only declare our feeling that the day will be no less happy for England than for India when it comes into fruition.

In this examination of a volume we consider the most important yet published by its eminent author, we have purposely omitted to examine Tagore as pure philosopher. Here frequently he is hazy and contradictory in doctrine as he is confused in metaphor. What can we make, for instance, of the assertion that beauty is "the self-offering of the One to the other One?" A dualism of Ones is too mystical for our crass intelligence. He can be arbitrary with the most swashbuckling of Occidentals. Why is poetry any more a universalization of the particular than a particularization of the universal? What else, indeed, than the second of these is the whole craft of imagery? Yet the interpretative and constructive value of these essays is so considerable that such matters are reduced to a mere technical nicety.

4 April, 1922

## THE NORTHERN ECHO

p4c6(D)

### CREATIVE UNITY

Rabindranath Tagore has written ten papers of absorbing interest, some of them of immediate importance, under the general title of "Creative Unity."

Lovers of this great Indian's poetry and of his other imaginative work will specially welcome chapters on the "Poet's Religion," "The Creative Ideal," "The Religion of the Forest," and "An Indian Folk Religion"; educationists the last paper on "An Eastern University," and all those who are thinking of the problems of East and West the three papers dealing with "the Spirit of Freedom," "The Nation," and "The Woman and Home."

The opening words of one of the remaining paper, "The Modern Age," give the general attitude of the poet to most of the subjects he discusses. "Whenever man meets man in a living relationship, the meeting finds its natural expression in works of art, the signatures of beauty, in which mingling of the personal touch leaves its memorial. On the other hand, a relationship of pure utility humiliates man - ignores the rights and needs of his deeper nature; it feels no compunction in maltreating and killing things of beauty that can never be restored.

### The Wrong Turning

Tagore has come to the conclusion that civilisation, especially in the West, has taken the wrong turning, and he is full of the idea that following upon a machine-made peace, the West is nourishing by its iniquities the underground forces of earthquake in the East.

As is well known, Tagore has lost the faith he once had in Nationalism. He has a deep love for the British people, but he distrusts all Governments, including that of the British. Neither has he faith in any kind of institution, but, as he says at the end of his essay on "The Nation," "In the individual, all over the world who think clearly, act nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth. Our moral ideals do not work with chisels and hammers. Like trees, they spread their roots in

the soil, and their branches in the sky, without consulting any architect for their plans."

### Practical Work

Whatever really develops human personality has his suffrage, and vice versa. His own contribution towards a solution of present problems is the foundation of a school in Bengal - the beginning of a University which will help India to become fully conscious of herself, and at the same time will assist in reconciling the East and the West.

Some of the most eloquent passages in this work occur in the letter from New York to the author's own countrymen, entitled, "The Spirit of Freedom," in which is emphasised the thought that Freedom should be an inner idea imparting strength to men's activities and breadth to their creations, and not merely a thing of external circumstance - the present danger in both East and West.

Every page of the book contains thoughts greatly needed by our generation, expressed in beautiful and inspiring language. (Macmillan, 7s 6d net.)

E.E.T.

5 April, 1922

## THE SOUTHPORT GUARDIAN

p7c4,2W)

### An Eastern "Fugitive."

"THE FUGITIVE" by RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan.7/6 net).

This collection of prose-poems, dramatic sketches, and translations expresses the distinctive quality of the great poet-philosopher of Bengal. It has, especially in the "Translations" - lyrical songs of Vaishnava, the nine Baul songs of the "mad" Religious mendicants and the Hindi songs of Janadasa - the note of mystic ecstasy and rapture that distinguishes all his work; an increasing Indian flavour; a subtle and sometimes exotic aroma. In some respects the pattern of the book is more difficult, more bizarre and more confusing than previous works; the symbolic threads are more subtly inter-

twined; the incense of the East more redolent. The "Fugitive" songs are in three parts, interspersed with dramatic allegories that in some cases illustrate the moral. The key of the book is set in the first song: "Darkly you sweep on, Eternal Fugitive, round whose bodiless rush stagnant space frets into eddying bubbles of light", and the first secretion, chiefly personal in key, presents the "immeasurable loneliness" of the man haunted by love, the disillusionment of the pursuit of youth everlasting - "you have shattered my freedom, and with its wreck built your own prison . . . the mercy of death works at life's core, bringing it respite from its own foolish persistence" - and the realisation of the self in the surrender of the self - "For once be careless, timid traveller, and utterly lose your way; wideawake though you are, be like broad daylight enticed by and netted in mist . . . Long have you watched over the store gathered by weary years. Let it be stripped, with nothing remaining but the desolate triumph of losing all." Yet in the allegory of Kacha and Devayani the Prince from Paradise finds the secret of immortality in love and not in mind - "Mind you build walls to imprison yourself"; in the Sage's daughter, and not in the wisdom of the Sage of the Titans. Then in the second "Fugitive" section the endless variety of the exuberant world, "Lady of Manifold Magnificence" is stripped of its glory by sorrow; the discipline of "unfulfilled hopes" is expressed, and "What was sorrow once has now become peace" - and the allegory of Ama and Vinayaka, with dramatic dignity and intense simplicity, illustrates in the sacrifice by the Brahmin daughter of her parent's love for the honour of her Mussulman husband how religious bigotry is destined to fail, "since through death and love I win to freedom." But the best of the dramatic allegories is "The Mother's Prayer," in which the futility of the philosophy of force, of fraudulent victory and arrogant jealousy is frankly expressed. The third Fugitive series express "the forest's heart pant for utterance," and the yearning of Spring, with many jewelled thoughts tangled in a jungly exuberant maze of words and ideas - for Tagore's mysticism is more involved, indefinite, and inchoate in this book than in any of his former works, and he seems to be moving more and more Eastwards. Yet we can occasionally glimpse through the maze of words in which Tagore's poetry enslaves our senses; evidently, in the words of

one of his own songs, Tagore has here definitely attempted the feat of one of his own birds: "While I rested within bounds I was content. But when I soared into vastness I found I could sing." But his vastness is the vastness of the West.

8 April, 1922

## THE NORTHERN WHIG AND BELFAST POST

p9c1(D)

### A HINDU LOOKS AT THE WORLD

**Creative Unity, By Rabindranath Tagore, London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., St. Martin's Street.**

After reading this book one feels more than ever curious as to how far Sir Rabindranath Tagore speaks for his millions of fellow countrymen. He is a highly cultured man, well read in the literature of the West as well as that of the East, but his point of view is undoubtedly different in many ways from that of any educated European who has placed his opinions on record. Rabindranath Tagore is acutely conscious of the difference; perhaps somewhat too conscious. At times he undoubtedly exaggerates, or, to put the case more accurately, he accepts as typical of a race the mental attitude of some individual which the leaders of Western public opinion would undoubtedly condemn. There is an instance of this on page 105, in the essay on "East and West." Our author, after condemning in strong terms what he calls the "forcible parasitism" practised by Europe on two large continents of the world, quotes a passage from a now forgotten book of African travel. The writers of this cynically advocated forced labour, declaring it to be "the corollary of our occupation of the country." It is, of course, shameful that such proposals should be made; doubly shameful that there should be attempts - as there undoubtedly have been - to put them into effect. But there is another side to the picture, which is ignored in this essay. Slavery has been abolished throughout huge areas where for hundreds of years it was the cause of horrible suffering. To what is its disappearance due? To the coming of those whom

Rabindranath Tagore calls "parasites." Even in relatively civilised Egypt the corvec was a native institution. The British suppressed it. Will it be revived now that Egypt is again a sovereign State? If it should be the felaheen at all events will have little cause to rejoice over the "liberation" of their country. It would be very unfair to pass an unfavourable judgment on "Creative Unity" because of that unfortunate passage. Its teaching on the whole is pure and elevated. Rabindranath Tagore is an idealist, and some of his arguments may make the "practical" reader smile. But this little book is full of beautiful, wise, and tender thoughts, often exquisitely expressed. Of very great interest is the account of the author's plans for an Eastern university, which "will invite students from the west to study the different systems of Indian philosophy, literature, art and music in their proper environment, encouraging them to carry on research work in collaboration with the scholars already engaged in this task." He has already formed the nucleus of such a university, and is convinced that it would be one of the best means of promoting mutual understanding between east and west. The Experiment certainly seems a promising one, and its success would make one more hopeful of the solution of that problem of race and colour which seems destined to enter on a highly critical stage long before the end of the present century.

10 April, 1922

**THE ABERDEEN DAILY JOURNAL**  
p2c4(D)

### **TAGORE'S ESSAYS**

#### **Life-Philosophy of the Indian poet**

**CREATIVE UNITY. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan. 7s. 6d.**

A strong, pure style, a passionate adoration of beauty, and a deep, general, but strict philosophy of thought are the three most prominent features of the great Indian poet's latest work to be published in English. None of Tagore's books are ordinary, and "Creative Unity", a collection

of ten essays, possesses in a special measure the faculty of stimulating the intellect. The first essay, on "The Poet's Religion," is the least powerful, in that its details of argument are at times difficult to follow, although there is no doubt about its general trend of exposition, showing that "the joy of unity within ourselves, seeking expression, becomes creative", and that unity, which is beauty, is the religion of the poet. The reader, however, finds a slight haziness in Tagore's conception of unity, and piquancy is imparted but strength lost by too frequent an indulgence in epigram. The second essay, "Creative Unity", follows directly on the lines of the first but without its precursor's faults. Both essays are full of delicate and profound criticism of English poetry. In "Religion of the Forest," Tagore contrasts the quiet, peaceable philosophy of the East with the West's love of striving and conflict. He finds the origin of the former in the forests which dominated the ancient East, and of the latter in the ocean which had to be conquered before the West could expand; and he concludes that the philosophy of peace is the correct and natural religion. Only an emasculated or unobservant Westerner would agree with him, for to us Nature is kept going by strife. Among the other essays, those on "The Modern Age," "The Spirit of Freedom", and "Woman and Home" have special interest for their own particular reasons, while "The Religion of the Forest," "An Indian Folk Religion", "East and West" and "An Eastern University"- indeed the whole tone and tenour of the volume - are an interpretation of the life-philosophy of one race to the members of another. "Creative Unity" is in every way Tagore at his highest and most nearly universal.

15 April, 1922

**YORKSHIRE GAZETTE**  
p6c5(W)

[The same article published in *The Northern Echo* on 4 April, 1922]

16 April, 1922

**THE OBSERVER**

p4c3(S)

**POETRY AND PLATITUDE**

**"Creative Unity." By Rabindranath Tagore.**  
(Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)

Lecturing has rather dulled Tagore's sense of poetry and sense of humour; only very occasionally does either show itself in these disconnected essays and addresses. It is not that his truisms are without force, but we expect something better from him than this mixture of Sir Arthur Helps and the later Maeterlinck. He indulges overmuch in statement, not enough in argument; and, in persuading us that man's chief aim is to realise his unity with the purpose and mind of the world, assumes too easily that that purpose is necessarily good, and ignores the claims of a transcendent rather than an immanent beauty in the world of man's spiritual experience. His best essay is that on East and West, with its warning that it is unfair to assume an identity crisis of the West and the mechanical utilitarian view of life; though in discussing the position of the natives in Africa he himself quotes only the opinions of those who would exploit the African, in obivion or ignorance of the work done in his protection by such Westerners as the Bishop of Zanzibar, or, the poet-missionary, Arthur Shearley Cripps.

There is pleasant humour in his picture of the worldly-minded men who "in their idea of the next world probably conjure up the ghosts of their slippers and dressing gowns, and expect the latchkey that opens their lodging-house door on earth to fit their front door in the other world"; but here, again, he does not admit that the less material ideas of heaven are more common even now among western than the eastern peoples, or that the religions which carry the materialistic conception farthest are Eastern. He shows, however, throughout the book a genuine desire for intellectual freedom, and is careful to insist that no other freedom can be a substitute for it - "he only has freedom who ideally loves freedom himself, and is glad to extend it to others... he who distrusts freedom in others loses his moral right to it"; and he protests against

Indian law of caste, which has "forced living souls into a permanent passivity, making them incapable of moulding circumstances to their own intrinsic design, and of mastering their own destiny." Here it is the poet speaking, and no Indian of to-day, except possibly Sundar Singh, has a truer message for his fellow-countrymen than has Tagore.

17 April, 1922

**BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE**

p5c4(D)

**TAGORE'S CHALLENGE**

The English writer to whom Tagore, as revealed in his essays, is nearest akin Mr. Edward Carpenter, but even in his use of the prose medium the essential poetry in him is stronger. Like Carpenter, he is at war with civilisation which has no other base than utility. He realises that in the west "the ideal of freedom has grown tenuous" because "perpetual anxiety for the protection of gains at any cost" strikes at the love of freedom and justice; and he went back to Indian "deeply impressed with the truth that real freedom is of the mind and spirit." That true permeates his essays in "Creative Unity" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.). The most fascinating deal with the attitude of the poet towards religion, and nature, and poetry. Here, too, he is at war with utility. In a poem "the subject must be completely merged" - hence the badness of patriotic poems and hymns. An interesting point, but surely difficult to justify, is that the new attitude of Shelley and Wordsworth towards nature - as compared with Shakespeare - is due to "the great mental change in Europe through the influence of the newly discovered philosophy of India." Tagore touches many subjects in these essays - nationality, women and home, and universities - and is always illuminating. As to East and West, he utters this challenge "The West has not sent out its humanity to meet the man in the East, but only its machine."

25 April, 1922

**THE YORKSHIRE OBSERVER**

p10c1(D)

**Section : BOOKS OF THE DAY**

**TWO STUDIES: TAGORE AND  
MASEFIELD**

A book bearing the name of Rabindranath Tagore is always sure of a welcome. The circle of his readers widens yearly; his influence spreads like a ripple which washes all shores. But the centre which sends forth that influence remains something of a mystery even to the philosopher's most ardent admirers. We are familiar with his outward appearance - with presentments of a man with a strange and beautiful face and the eyes of a prophet - but there is a reserve in all he writes which baffles curious investigators into the hidden places of his mind.

"Creative Unity," the volume under notice, consists of a series of essays on art and modern questions. The first, on "The Poet's Religion," the second, on "The Creative Ideal," and, indeed, the whole contents are flavoured by the philosophy of Keats, at once so hackneyed and so incomprehensible to most of its users, which is expressed in the lines:

Beauty is truth, truth beauty; that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

To Tagore the statement is not incomprehensible; it is akin to his own thought; it is an article of his faith. It is a riddle which might have out of the East, instead of the mind of a cockney-born literary aspirant. "Beauty is no phantasy, it has the everlasting meaning of reality. The facts that cause despondence are gloom are mere mist, and when through the mist beauty breaks out in momentary gleam, we realise that Peace is true and not conflict, Love is true and not hatred..."

The philosopher who has made this creed his own can write with calm detachment of the fever of the modern age, its worship of money, its organised selfishness. He usages the need for art in education of his own people, and for idealism in national life. Of the sphere of woman he speaks as is natural to a man of his race; she is allotted an intellectual as well as physical function separate and

different from those of her mate. "For life finds its truth and beauty not in any exaggeration of sameness, but in harmony."

Touching the meeting of East and Western his own country, the poet makes a plea for greater reciprocity. "The West has not sent out its humanity to meet the man in the East, but only its machine. You must know that red tape can never be a common human bond, that it is a painful ordeal for human beings to have to receive favours from animated pigeon-holes, and condescensions from printed circulars that give notice but never speak."

A.V.

27 April, 1922

**THE CHRISTIAN WORLD**

p19(W)

**TAGORE'S ESSAYS**

**Creative Unity. By Rabindranath Tagore.  
(Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.)**

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore gives the general title of Creative Unity to a collection of essays on various subjects, the connecting link being the touchstone of all his judgments - his doctrine of the One and the Many. All our attempts to confine this oriental creed - pantheistic, mystic, whatever one may choose to call it - within the limits of legalistic prose leave us unsatisfied. We will, therefore, only quote a sentence or two of Tagore himself, leaving them in their native poetic vagueness:

This one in me knows the universe of the many  
But, in whatever it knows, it knows the One in different aspects  
It knows this room only because this room is One to it, in spite of the seeming contradictions of the endless facts contained in the single fact of the room

.. This One in me is creative. Its creations are a pastime, through which it gives expressions to an ideal of unity in its endless show of variety. Such are its pictures, poems, music, in which it finds joy only because they reveal the perfect forms of an inherent unity.

We may remark in passing that the implied denial of the conventional aesthetic creed in the last

sentence strongly resembles the attitude of Wordsworth (whom Tagore quotes with keen appreciation). He sought ultimately in Nature, not beauty, but unity. Tagore's concern in this volume, however, is not with aesthetics, but with religion, ethics and especially politics.

What really makes the book important (to students of Tagore and of India, at all events) is its revelation, in passages constantly occurring of Tagore's present attitude towards the West. Briefly, that attitude is one of irritation and impatience. In the past this poet has drawn gladly from Western thought and culture, and has interpreted the West to the East as he has interpreted the East to the West. The political events of the last few years, however, seem to have been too much for him. The Western spirit, he fears, with its mechanical and material collectivism, is killing the free impulse of individualism and humanity.

The wriggling tentacles of a cold-blooded utilitarianism, with which the West has grasped all the easily yielding succulent portions of the East, are causing pain and indignation throughout the Eastern countries. The West comes to us, not with the imagination and sympathy that create and unite, but with a shock of passion - passion for power and wealth. I have been fortunate in coming into close touch with individual men and women of the Western countries, and have felt with them their sorrows and shared their aspirations. I have known that they seek the same God, who is my God - even those who deny Him. I feel certain that, if the great light of the culture be extinct in Europe, our horizon in the East will mourn in darkness. It does not hurt my pride to acknowledge that, in the present age, Western humanity has received its mission to be the teacher of the world; that her science, through the mastery of the laws of Nature, is to liberate human souls from the dark dungeon of matter. For this very reason I have realised all the more strongly, on the other hand, that the dominant collective idea in the Western countries is not creative. It is ready to enslave or kill individuals, to drug a great people with soul-killing prison, darkening the whole future with the black mist of stupefaction, and emasculating entire races of men to the utmost degree of helplessness. It is wholly wanting in spiritual power to blend and harmonise; it lacks the sense of the great personality of man."

There is a core of truth in all this, no doubt, but we regret that such a man as Tagore should be irritated into such a general and exaggerated onslaught. Still, it is a warning to those amongst us who ignore the deep fires that burn beneath the philosophic calm of the East. Moreover, Tagore, in another essay, runs with equal candour to his own countrymen and rejects much of their nationalistic aspiration as tainted with the same poison of power, force and materialism. The style of these essays is distinguished and vigorous, the subjects alive and important. We could wish Tagore had revised his allusions to missionaries by the light of his usually unexceptionable good taste.

28 April, 1922

**THE IRISH TIMES**

p3c3(D)

### EAST MEETS WEST

These essays\* breathe a wonderful spirit of understanding and sympathy with the ideals of the Western world. At the same time they do not yield in pride concerning those of the East. Indeed, they speak insistently of the loss to the world through the misunderstanding of the East by the West. There is no doubt that a little give-and-take would be to the advantage of both. As a revelation of the higher thought of the East and of the unity that lies behind all upward striving this book is most encouraging. The analyses of the forces at work to-day in the struggle of man to self-expression in government are illuminating, and contain warnings of the evils to which apparent high aims may lead. The paper on "The Nation," where crowd psychology is discussed, is a plea for a broader conception of the duties of countries and races to one another. "With the growth of nationalism man has become the greatest menace to man" becomes something of text to the conclusion that "this age of nationalism, of gigantic vanity and selfishness, is only a passing phase in civilisation, and those who are making permanent arrangements for accommodating this

\*"Creative Unity" by Rabindranath Tagore, Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.

temporary mood of history will be unable to fit themselves for the coming age, when the true spirit of freedom will have sway."

Of the position of woman, Mr. Tagore has much to say; but as it is entirely from a masculine point of view, it is necessarily incomplete, though obviously well-intentioned. A great deal of wrong and loss can shelter behind his simple ruling that "woman has to be ready to suffer." Is there any human being who escapes suffering? To advise a sex to be content with it would be ludicrous if one did not know the dread realities in all countries and ages against which women have struggled. Can Mr. Tagore not see that one of the most potent factors in creative unity is absolute sincerity and truth? To do her part towards this unity woman must be herself unlimited as to scope of work, untrammelled in the doing of it, and entirely free to choose her own destiny. Mutual toleration and respect make decent minds careful of encroaching upon another's rights, and inculcate a certain self-denial, self-control, and possibly suffering for others' good. Let us strive that it be mutual, and the question of government, law and order will be solved

19 May, 1922

## WESTERN MAIL

p12c1-2(D)

### CREATIVE UNITY

### ATTRACTIVE ESSAYS ON EAST AND WEST

"Creative Unity" by Rabindranath Tagore.  
(London: Macmillan and Co.; pp. vi and 203: 7s.  
6d. net.)

The judgments of the stranger upon our customs and institutions are always of interest, especially when the judge is a creative poet. This book is a collection of essays, more or less disconnected, but with a certain continuity of thought. Chief interest for us is found in the latter portion of the work, where the author, in half-a-dozen brilliantly written essays, discusses the relation between East and West. For him "the most significant fact of modern days is this, that the

West has met the East". But what is this West and what the East? To most the East remains largely unexplored, and the West is in the hands of the machine. "The civilisation of the West," he writes, "has in it the spirit of the machine which must move, and to that blind movement human lives are offered as fuel, keeping up the steam power." Hence the cult of nationalism, the training of men for a particular purpose, usually a narrow one, and the insistence upon absolute loyalty to it. Hence, also, the exploitation of subject races, the cult of power, and the idolatry of money. "For barbarism is the simplicity of a superficial life."

Where, then, is the meeting ground? He would find it in the university, where men and women can meet to work together in the pursuit of common ideals and share in that common heritage. In the essay on "An Eastern University" Mr Tagore casts shrewd glances of our Western education "Western education," he writes, "is impersonal. Its complexion is also white, but it is the whiteness of the white-washed class-room walls. It dwells in the cold storage compartments of lessons and the ice-packed minds of the school-masters." It is this type of education which has been exported into India, and its youth "pass examinations and shrivel up into clerks, lawyers, and police inspectors, and they die young." So the community of your India becomes not "a cultured community, but a community of qualified candidates." The remedy he would find, as some are finding here to-day, is an education which must be one with the people's life. Its teachers should be found in the villages, where, to crowded meetings, they repeat the best thoughts and keep alive the best ideals of the land. Thus, to him, the university should not be merely the dry-as-dust, formal accumulation of knowledge. It must not be a dead cage in which living minds are fed with food artificially prepared. "It should be an open house in which students and teachers are at one. They must live their complete life together, dominated by a common aspiration for truth and a need of sharing all the delights of culture."

Space does not permit of further quotation. Mr. Tagore clothes his thoughts more attractive because of its delightful simplicity. The book is one which all should read.

22 May, 1922

**THE GLASGOW HERALD**

p6c5(D)

**Section: LITERATURE**

**"Rabindranath Tagore." By E. J. Thompson.**  
**2s. 6d. net. (Oxford University Press)**

We recommend to admirers of Tagore and to all who are interested in poetry or letters this excellent little study of the Indian writer. It is most discriminating work about him that we have read; it is inspired by a deep admiration of his best, weaknesses, and will probably shock his English followers by its blunt affirmation that it is the weaknesses that are most admired in Britain. Mr. Thompson goes further, and asserts that the misjudged admiration of Mr. Yeats and others was largely responsible for the pretty sweetness that came to infect his work. Such phrases as his "maddening monotony of tone and diction and sameness of imagery" and "his treatment of his Western public (in matter of translation) has amounted to an insult to their intelligence" show how directly Mr. Thompson writes. But his book is not a depreciation. No one can read it without being amazed by the volume and power of Tagore's work

23 May, 1922

**LIVERPOOL DAILY POST AND MERCURY**

p9c1(D)

Students of Rabindranath Tagore's previous prose works will specially welcome his latest book on "Creative Unity" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net), which completes much of what he has said less fully in earlier expositions. In writing it, he is possessed by Matthew Arnold's desire to "see life steadily and see it whole", and wholeness, he sees, is an attribute of personality alone. The creative unity of the universe presupposes an Infinite personality behind it, to whom the universe stands in the same relation as that of a poem to the poet. In his insistence of the significance of personality, Tagore is at one with the best philosophic instinct of the day, and is entirely opposed to the popular ideas of

Oriental philosophy. The book is full of pregnant aphorisms. Its power lies, not in syllogistic argument, but in arresting expression of deep and penetrating intuitions.

25 May, 1922

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p335(W)

**EAST TO WEST**

**CREATIVE UNITY. By RABINDRANATH TAGORE**  
**(Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.)**

Dr Rabindranath Tagore's new book sounds yet again in our ears the burden of the message with which he feels himself charged to the men of his generation, both in the East and in the West. Or perhaps it is really to place him in a false light to represent him as willingly or consciously a prophet, and to do so may hinder a real appreciation of him on the part of his Western readers. For if he be taken as laying down an authoritative teaching, that may provoke on their side a disposition to challenge many of his statements and show them to be exaggerated or one-sided. Perhaps the proper *rapport* between Rabindranath and his readers is only secured when there is seen in him something of the pathos which attaches to all human struggle for right adjustment to this complicated, fascinating, and bewildering universe. He is a man like ourselves, beaten upon and swayed by the various forces of the modern world, and trying amongst them all to find a sure ground for his soul, a standpoint from which the chaos is reduced to harmony. That is his problem, and that is ours; and in our own wrestling we may get help and direction from one who is not only our fellow in conflict, but a spirit of fine and rich sensibilities, possessed by the poetic tradition of his own people, which invests the Indian environment with its wealth of images and suggestions, but at the same time keenly appreciative of so much in the Western spirit, especially of its heritage in poetry. And if Rabindranath's great dream is an association between East and West, in which the elements derived from the West are taken up into a

free and creative Indian personality, he himself already gives an example of such organic union. His writings alone show the absurdity of affirming that East and West can never meet; hundreds of Western men and women in reading him must feel that here they are in contact with someone with whom they could converse far more fully about the things for which they most care than with the majority of their fellow-countrymen.

Several of the essays in this book show Rabindranath's thought to be still in large measure determined by his repulsion from what seems to him the machine-like organization of life in the West. It is a repulsion so dominant as to exclude those qualifications which we might think called for in his judgements. But, If this emotion throws his view of the facts somewhat out of proportion, it is an emotion excited by an evil which really exists, which is painfully felt by many amongst ourselves; and it may draw us nearer to Rabindranath to find in him not so much the infallible sage as the man of strong individual feelings. Nor can one take it amiss in a poet if he believes that the apprehension of Nature in love and imagination has more truth in it than analytic science.

The giant forces of the world, centripetal and centrifugal, are kept out of our recognition. They are the day-labourers and not admitted into the audience-hall of creation. But light and sound come to us in their gay dresses as troubadours singing serenades before the windows of the senses. What is constantly before us, claiming our attention, is not the kitchen, but the feast; not the anatomy of the world, but its countenance

At the same time Rabindranath is concerned to do justice to Western science, and he indicates this more than once in these essays as the thing of value which the East has to receive from the West. He sees that it is useful as giving a command over the forces of Nature, and would thus be required by the India of his dreams. He sees that if it cannot set the ends for the human spirit, it can at any rate furnish the means. But perhaps he might have shown more fully than he does the value of science for the human spirit itself. The discipline of scientific inquiry, in which personal desires and preferences for this or that

conclusion have to be sternly suppressed and the truth, as it is, sought for without any egoistic bias, is not so very far from the suppression of egoistic desires in the Indian ascetic discipline. For the ideal of truth to which the scientific inquirer subjects his ego is a spiritual ideal no less than the ideal of beauty which the poet follows in his apprehension of reality. And some such ascetic discipline seems really required by the human spirit in its striving to transcend the world - Baron von Hugel in his characteristic language has described as "plunging in the thing-element," a necessary preliminary, he holds, to the soul's ascent. If the West to-day has command of material things in virtue of its science, that power had a spiritual origin; and when the West uses its power for low ends, it is something worse than materialism, it is an abuse of the spirit.

Believing this, we shall perhaps find it less hard to understand how it is that during these latter centuries the Europe which seems to have achieved so much in the sphere of material wealth and power is also the part of the world in which there has been the greatest production of poetry and philosophy. If one estimates spiritual endowment by original production, one must place the Europe of the last four centuries above contemporary India, not only in the material, but also in the spiritual sphere. An older India indeed had produced work of the greatest in thought and in poetry, but India's spiritual production during the last four centuries has been unquestionably poorer than that of Europe.

Were there more space available, one would like to quote many things finely said in these essays, but one may draw attention to two matters which seem of peculiar interest. One is the account of the Baul sect, a community of mendicant ascetics of the humble, illiterate class, who embody their religion in songs of a touching beauty

What hast thou come to beg from the begger, O  
King of kings?

My kingdom is poor for want of him, my dear  
one, and I wait for him in sorrow

How long will you keep him waiting, O wretch,  
who has waited for you for ages in silence and still-  
ness?

Open your gate, and make this very moment fit  
for the union.

The other matter is the poet's scheme for an Indian university propounded in the concluding essay. What he says in depreciation of the type of education established by the British in India is probably only too true. The trouble has been that modes of education traditional in England (and perhaps not altogether satisfactory here) were unintelligently transferred to the very different Indian world. Those who introduced them never turned their thought to first principles and asked what precisely education was intended to accomplish. Rabindranath does raise this fundamental question, and the ideal of a university which he sketches really brings thought and imagination to bear upon the problem. His university is not to confine itself to intellectual culture, but "cooperate with the villages round it, cultivate land, breed cattle, spin cloths, press oil from oilseeds." How far the exigencies of time would admit of the poet's ideals being realized in practice one does not know; but one hopes that if the people of Bengal are now to frame their educational system for themselves, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore will be called into counsel.

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26 May, 1922

**THE TIMES**

p9c6(D)

**Section: IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN NEWS  
ITEMS**

Chitra and The King of the Dark Room [sic] will be produced at the Nouveau Theatre, Paris, on May 27, these being the first of Rabindranath Tagore's plays to be given in France.

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27 May, 1922

**THE BIRKENHEAD NEWS**

p4c3(2W)

**Section : BOOKS AND MAGAZINES**

**CREATIVE UNITY, By RABINDRANATH  
TAGORE (Macmillan and Co.), 7s. 6d.**

Poets are not usually competent expounders of the intellectual basis of their imaginative work, but Tagore is an exception to this rule. Here is a book of essays in prose which has almost as high a distinction as his poems. This astonishing man writes in English as pure and as delicate, as beautiful in its rhymes, as we should expect from one who had worked all his life exclusively at English style. Yet we know him to be a writer in one of the great languages of the East, and he only writes in English in order to come into contact with what is to him an outside world which he would labour to bring into sympathy with his own country men. The value of Tagore to the British Empire at the present moment is one that we are in no danger of exaggerating. It has been said, flippantly and foolishly of East and West, "never the twain shall meet." In Tagore they actually meet. It would be well for our Western world if his teaching could be noted, based as it is on no partisan or particularist or nationalist aims. The nearest parallel we have had in our own recent literature to this poet turned essayist is Matthew Arnold. Like Arnold, Tagore also rallies, with a trenchant wit and a power of smiting phrase, the foibles and blindness of a Western civilization that deals cavalierly with Indian life and ideas. In criticising Calcutta, "the upstart town with no depth of sentiment in her face, and in her manners," he is really giving us of the West a chance of seeing ourselves as others see us. There is no trace of the Babu whom "Punch" delights to serve up as the stock caricature of the educated Indian. We feel that in his deeply religious interpretations of life and society we are in contact with the real East, across the unexplored mystery of which the clumsy figures of Kipling and his tribe have sprawled and left a dirty smear for our imaginations. Frederic Harrison has just been saying that there cannot be permanent union between an Eastern Empire and our race. Perhaps not in terms of Empire: but Tagore shows us the possibility of something deeper than

Empire as a bond of union. With him will be all those who believe in an ultimately rationality in human affairs.

W.W.

19 July, 1922

# THE LIVERPOOL COURIER

p9c7(D)

## Section: PAGES IN WAITING

\* \* \*

"Creative Unity," by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), is a mystic at his most intelligible. It is filled with upward lift and onward urge, and the like, and should be inspiring to those who have either never been taught philosophically to think, or who lack the courage to do so.

Its final essay on "An Eastern University" is of considerable value to students of the Indian problems, but it is a little marred by the inevitable wooliness of such phrases as "the eternal voice of man," "the great meeting of man in the future," and "the world of art." These excursions into the verbally picturesque are literary and not philosophical, and it is as philosopher that Tagore obviously wishes us to take him.

21 July, 1922

# THE DAILY SKETCH

p5c4(D)

## Section: Echoes of the Town

**Words by Tagore.** — Medina also gave us tenor solos, and the two vocalists joined in a duet, with words by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, to music by di Veroli, who accompanied them. Lord and Lady Cork were among the guests, and so were Lady Ashfield, who brought her niece, Miss Whitehouse, to say "good-bye" after her eleven months' trip to Europe, Mrs. Chamberlain (wearing a rose-trimmed brown hat), Mr and Mrs. Isitt, Count and Countess de la Chapelle,

Lady Wyndham, and Lady Waterlow (in pale pink), who gave a reassuring account of Sir Philip

23 July, 1922

# THE SUNDAY TIMES

p7c4(S)

## THE EAST LOOKS AT THE WEST

"Creative Unity" By Sir Rabindranath Tagore.  
(Macmillan. 7s. 6d.)

In days when everyone must still be analysing everything, it is refreshing to encounter a mind which hungrily after synthesis. Alike in his abstract principles and in their application to life, Sir Rabindranath Tagore constantly refers individual thoughts and actions to unity of oneness. Shelley's line.

The One remains, the many change and pass

seems a fair paraphrase of his philosophy. It is curious, indeed, how often the sentiments of this Eastern thinker remind one of older sayings in our own tongue. "Age after age", he writes, "there has come to us the call of faith, which said against all evidence of fact, 'you are more than you appear to be, more than your circumstances seem to warrant.' What is this but a repetition of Wordsworth's

We feel that we are greater than we know

Again, when he argues that pugnacity is not necessarily a human trait, the reader is irresistibly reminded of Matthew Arnold:

Man would be.. \*

If only that were a universal truth, the millennium would be in sight.

Meanwhile we have to deal with our earth as it is. Sir. R. Tagore sighs for some world-pervading unity that will reconcile contending ambitions, races, creeds, and colours. We shall get it, perhaps, in the course of ages.

Such a consummation is simple enough in theory. All that he need is a cordial acceptance of the undoubted truth, "Sirs, you are brethren". But it is in the practical application of that accent, as all know, that the difficulty arises. Sir R. Tagore has only to look at the land of his birth with its deep fissure between Mohammedan and Hindu and its sundering barriers of caste and purdah. The spirit of exclusiveness is nowhere more prevalent than in India. The consideration of those facts might have availed to temper his arraignment of the imperfections of the West; but it has not done so.

He mostly employs generalities. He does not comment into the open and state his views upon the non-co-operation movement and the other troubles, many of them self-induced, which beset India at the moment. It is hard to deal with such a controversialist. He complains at large of the want of sympathy which characterises and disfigures our Indian administration. From my own small experi-

ence I could give him evidence to the contrary in grateful letters and in tokens of regards received by British officers, both civil and military, from Indians, and doubtless many others could do the same. In his one and only sharply defined charge he asserts that our merchants in India enrich themselves by employing cheapest labour. If this be so perhaps someone will take up his challenge let the various legislator of India see to it.

In time despite the obvious faults, this book should be read. It is a wholesome discipliner for a nation, for a continent, to know what is being said and thought of it elsewhere. "Asia," writes the author, "is awakening Today, trying to read the future by the light of the European configuration, we are asking ourselves everywhere in the East: Is this frightfully overgrown power really great? It can bruise us from without, but can it add to our wealth and spirit". The mere asking of each questions by the East should put the West upon its mettle.

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1923

23 February, 1923  
**THE NEW LEADER**  
p11-12(W)

## A PERSONAL VIEW OF TAGORE

By G. LOWES DICKINSON

THERE must be many people in London who remember the appearance, in drawing-rooms or studios or concert halls, of a slim, tall figure in a long coat, with a bearing of unusual dignity and a countenance of surprising beauty. He looked like a visitor, not merely from another continent, but from another sphere. For all exquisite courtesy, he was always aloof. He sometimes seemed to be talking to himself. And it pleases me to think, though the story may be a myth, that the words once overheard at a crowded reception were these: "Silly, silly, silly!" For myself, I have a remembrance which I cherish. It is a June evening, in a Cambridge garden. Mr. Bertrand Russell and myself sit there alone with Tagore. He sings us some of his poems, the beautiful voice and the strange mode floating away on the gathering darkness. Then Russell begins to talk, coruscating like lightening in the dusk, Tagore falls into silence. But afterwards he said it had been wonderful to hear Russell talk. He has passed into a "higher state of consciousness", and heard him, as it were from a distance. What, I wonder, had he heard?

Tagore was a stranger and a wanderer in our West. But he was not without appreciation of it. Its noise, its vacuity, its hurry after nothing - "Faster, faster, said the Red Queen, there's no time to think", repelled him, as it repels even Westerners who are thoughtful. But he found, he told me, something that he missed in the east. It was our moral earnestness. We had, some of us, a "passion for reforming the world". In India they had no. And he added, as I remember, that life in the East was very dull.

That was before the war, and it shines out to me now like a very distant planet over a very black world. But I have seen Tagore again since the war, always the same calm and beautiful figure. Once, I remember, at a concert, where Jelly d'Aranyi was

playing. "She is like a flame", he said. And those who have heard and seen her will know how just the image was.

But to see, to meet and to admire Tagore is not to comprehend. Perhaps no Englishman could. For we are embedded in the channel down which our formidable river rushes. We see the stars dizzily, and our noise drowns the murmur of the night wind. Years ago I tried to express the feeling produced in me by India, as contrasted with Europe, with America, with China. I said she had the religion of Eternity, while we had that of Time. There was perhaps some truth in this. For here, in the modern West, if we have any religion, it is of works. And for centuries untold the religion of India has been that of meditation. But our torrent of works has burst the dikes of our religion, pursuing force instead of strength, money instead of righteousness, we are plunging at last down that Niagra heard long ago in the distance by Carlyle. Motion has destroyed us.

But India has maintained for centuries the attitude which mediaeval Christianity tried in vain to acclimatise in the West. The Real there is behind Appearance, the Eternal back of Time -

"Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again and fillest it ever with fresh life"

"This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new"

"At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance in-fable"

"Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these your small hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest and still there is room to fill"

That is the experience which lies behind all Tagore's poems. But since he is poet, not only a philosopher or a mystic, and a poet greater, one gathers, than anyone can know who cannot read him in Bengali language, all nature comes to him to utter his passion

"The sky is overcast with clouds and the rain is ceaseless. I know not what this is that stirs in me. I know not its meaning"

"A moment's flash of lightening drags down a



**Fig. 30** Rabindranath Tagore, sketch by William Rothenstein  
*The New Leader* 23 February 1923, p11

deeper gloom on my sight, and my heart gropes for the path to where the music of the night calls me.

"Light! Oh, where is the light? Kindle it with the burning torch of desire! It thunders and the wind rushes screaming through the void. The night is black as a black stone. Let not the hours pass by in the dark. Kindle the lamp of love with thy life."

It is perhaps because he is a poet, and therefore sensitive to all things concrete, that Tagore seems to feel that in these later days the religion of India has become too inward, abstract and self-absorbed. He describes somewhere the building of a shrine without doors or windows, lit by lamps of perfumed oil and heavy with incense. The walls are caved with fantastic figures, such as may be seen in any Indian temple. No song of birds enters nor any noises of the village. "The only sound that echoed in its dome was that of incantations which I chanted. My mind became keen and still like a pointed flame, my sense swooned in ecstasy". Then a thunderbolt strikes the temple. The daylight breaks in. The carvings on the wall stare empty of meaning. But "I looked at the image on the alter. I saw it smiling and alive with the living touch of God. The night I had imprisoned spread its wings and vanished."

The poet, it will seem, feels that as the West has over-emphasised Time, so India has over-emphasised Eternity. The instinct of his art and his life is to reunite these. And if, as may well be the case, the next centuries are to see the reaction of the east against the guns and science and industry of the West, then perhaps both East and West may reach that better state to which Tagore looks forward:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free; where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls:

Where words come up from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the dreary desert of dead habits;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let us wake."

24 February, 1923

**JOHN O'LONDON'S WEEKLY**  
p745(W)

#### Section: MR SHANKS'S JUDGEMENTS

[This is the last paragraph of a critical assessment of works of some notable poets by Edward Shanks]

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Tagore is vaguely like Shelley in that he is more occupied with emotions than with persons, with thoughts than with things.

24 November, 1923

**THE INQUIRER**  
p759(W)

MR EDWARD SHANKS, writing on the award of the Nobel Prize for literature, reminds us that the bestowal of the prize on Rabindranath Tagore in 1913 was made at a time when Indian nationalism was being brought to the notice of the world. Now the choice of Mr. W. B. Yeats "comes pat on the establishment of the Irish Free State". It is a charming compliment both to the poet and to his country; and while we agree with Mr. Shanks that Thomas Hardy has been strangely and regrettably overlooked once more, we are glad that genius as rare but as indisputable as Mr. Yeats has received this recognition in Sweden.

27 November, 1923

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**  
p16c3(D)

#### AN INDIAN MEMORIAL TO W.W. PEARSON

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S APPEAL**  
*To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian*

Sir, - The news has reached us of W. W. Pearson's death through an accident which happened while

he was travelling in Italy on the eve of his departure for India. He is not known to the wide public, but we feel sure that his loss is not merely a loss to the individuals who came into intimate touch with him. We seldom met with anyone whose love for humanity was so concretely real, whose ideal of service so assimilated to his personality, as it had been with him. The gift of friendliness, which he was ever ready to bestow upon the obscure, upon those who had nothing to attract the attention of their neighbours, was spontaneous in its generosity, completely free from all tinge of conscious or unconscious egotism, enjoying the luxury of the satisfied pride of goodness. The constant help which he rendered to those who were in need of it could have no reward in public recognition; it was as simple and silent as the daily fulfilling of his own personal requirements. His patriotism was for the world of man; he intimately suffered for all injustice or cruelty inflicted upon any people in any part of the earth, and in his chivalrous attempt to befriend them he bravely courted punishment from his own countrymen. He had accepted Santiniketan Ashram for his home, where he felt he could realize his desire to serve the cause of humanity and express his love for India, which was deeply genuine in his nature, all his aspirations of life centering in her.

I know he has numerous friends in this country and outside India who admire the noble unselfishness of heart which he possessed, and who mourn his loss. I feel sure they will appreciate our idea of setting up some permanent memorial in his name in our Ashram, which was so dear to him. He had a great desire to see the hospital in connection with our institution rebuilt and equipped in an adequate manner, for which he was working and contributing money whenever possible. I believe if we can carry out this wish of his and construct a

hospital building, and a special ward for children attached to it, this will be the best form of perpetuating his memory, reminding us of his sympathy for those who suffer. With this object in our mind we send our appeal to his friends and admirers in India and in other countries, hoping to meet with a generous response. — Yours, &c.,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Santiniketan, Bengal, November 5.

The local secretary writes:- The cost of erecting a fully equipped hospital is estimated at Rs. 25,000. Contributions may be sent to the treasurer, Visvabharati, Santiniketan P.O. Cheques and postal orders should be crossed on the Imperial Bank of India (Calcutta branch), and endorsed "Hospital Fund." Receipts, duly signed by the secretary, will be sent to contributors.

22 December, 1923

JOHN O'LONDON'S WEEKLY

p473(W)



Rabindranath Tagore.

Fig. 31

John O'London's Weekly  
22 December 1923, p473

## THE BOOK WORLD

### Tagore as Novelist

At one time there was an English "boom", almost a cult, in the writings of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. The war interfered with it, however, and it may never gather the same force again.

Even so, Tagore always sells, and his new novel, "Gora", may sell better than any other that he has given us, because it is more dramatic. It is a Calcutta story, and the time and the scenes of it belong to about a quarter of a century after the Indian Mutiny.

1924

2 February, 1924

THE NEW STATESMAN

p482-484(W)

[This is a long review by Raymond Mortimer of six novels which includes a brief note on "Gora".]

### NEW NOVELS

The Day-Boy. By RONALD GURNER, Grant Richards. 7s. 6d.

Andivius Hedulio. By EDWARD LUCAS WHITE. Fisher Unwin. 7s. 6d.

Herr Arne's Head. By SELMA LAGERLOF. Gylendal. 6s.

Gora. By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

The Groote Park Murder. By FREEMAN WILLS CROFT. COLLINS. 7s. 6d.

The Hare of Heaven. By LEONORA EYLES. Melrose. 7s. 6d.

*Herr Arne's Head* is a ghost-story, presumably drawn from Scandinavian legend. The authoress is definitely an artist. *Gora* deals with the old question of mixed marriage as it confronts the orthodox and unorthodox Hindus. Sir Rabindranath Tagore paints an unattractive, and probably unfair, picture of the Bengali, and the reader's belief in the subtlety and wisdom of the Orient suffers accordingly.

9 February, 1924

THE NATION AND THE ATHENAEUM

p669(W)

### Section : THE WORLD OF BOOKS

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

I MUST confess that the writings of Mr. Tagore have hitherto left me cold. In the original his poems may be real great poetry; in English they have a thin

weakness which may be entirely acquired in their passage from one language to the other, but which, once there, is none the less fatal. The book of his which I liked best is a slim volume called "Nationalism," published in 1917. Its essays were originally, I believe, delivered in the form of lectures; they are not very profound, but they show an honest and independent mind trying to think along its own path.

\* \* \*

Mr. Tagore's new book is a novel with the title "Gora" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.). It is a very long book, containing over 400 pages, and it is by no means light reading. I would not recommend it broadcast, because probably many people would find it merely boring, but I can only record the fact that to me it was extraordinarily interesting, and I think it a book of considerable merit. As to the kind and degree of merit possessed by it, I should not like to be dogmatic. One of the most difficult things in criticizing a book which obviously aims at being a work of art is to keep distinct in one's own mind the interest of its subject and its total achievement and effect as a work of art. The difficulty is intensified in the case of a novel like Mr. Tagore's, which may almost be said to be written about a thesis. Here the critic's judgement may be warped or obscured in one of two ways. If the subject is very interesting to him, he may be easily carried away to confuse a profound study of some contemporary problem or an effective political tract with a great novel or play. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," for instance, had considerable merits, but they were not those of a work of art. On the other hand, there is the opposite danger to guard against: the writer's subject may raise so thick a fog of boredom in front of your eyes as to make it impossible to see the artistic merits of his work. A very good instance is "Paradise Lost," for many people, if they are honest, would admit that they find the greatest difficulty in forgetting what Milton is saying in order to be able to listen to his poetry. (There was a minor example of this, I think, the other day in the columns of this paper. In my opinion, the reviewer of "A Week," by Jury Libedinsky (Allen and Unwin, 5s.), missed some real artistic merits in the book because its subject bored him.)

\* \* \*

The subject of "Gora" is intensely interesting to me, and Mr. Tagore's handling of it kept me absorbed

throughout his book. His thesis is the social, political, and psychological problems which confront the educated Bengali in Calcutta to-day. At the beginning of the story we are introduced to young men, Gourmohan Babu, or Gora, and Binoy Babu; they are the most ardent nationalists and idealists. Although they have acquired through education the knowledge of the West, they have deliberately turned from it to embrace the strictest form of orthodox Hinduism. In caste and Brahminism and the rigid divisions and formalities of Hinduism they see "India" and the salvation of India. They get to know the family of Paresb Babu, a leading member of the Brahmo Samaj. The tenets of the Brahmo Samaj are the opposite of those of orthodox Hinduism: the Brahmos have turned to Western civilization for both their social rules and philosophy of life; they reject caste, idol worship, and the formalities of Hinduism, and their women folk are "emancipated." It is through the women of Paresb Babu's family that the clash between the old and the new becomes acute in the minds of the two young Bengalis. For when Binoy falls in love with Lolita and Gora with Sucharita, they have to face the fact their desires are incompatible with their beliefs and theories.

\* \* \*

This is the rough setting which Mr. Tagore has chosen for his picture of Indian life. As a picture of life and of the various currents of theory and belief and aspiration which sweep down upon the young Bengali as soon as he begins to look about him in British India, the book is remarkably interesting. The picture is given mainly through conversations, very long conversations about religion, caste, the position of women, the British in India, and similar "subjects," and here, of course, there is matter for considerable difference of opinion. The subjects happen to interest me, and I never found the book for a moment tedious, but I can imagine that anyone who was not interested in them might find some parts of the book very boring.

\* \* \*

And now for "Gora" as a novel, as a work of art. I find it a difficult book to criticize. In form it is very old-fashioned; indeed, it belongs to the antediluvian

school of Anthony Trollope. There is the same profusion of quiet detail in description, conversation, and analysis; the same flat surface and monotonously low tone; the same persistent air of everydayness. Within the convention which Mr. Tagore has adopted he has certain obvious and important merits. Many of his characters are remarkably alive, and the skill with which he makes them grow in subtlety upon the canvas of his book is often admirable. The character of Anandamoyi, the "mother" in the strict, orthodox Hindu household, with her instinctive freedom of mind and wisdom, is perhaps the best in the book, sketched with minute, delicate touches. "If you do that," someone says to her, "won't you get into trouble?" "I may, but what of that?" she replies. "Even if there is a slight fuss, one has only to remain quiet for a little, and it will all be forgotten." The more complicated character of Sucharita is also very good, and in Binoy Mr. Tagore has achieved what very few novelists have attempted successfully, a *jeune premier* who is not merely a lay figure.

\* \* \*

When I come to Gora, the central figure in the book, I feel far more doubtful. And the novel stands or falls as a work of art with Gora and his story. Gora has been brought up as the son of Anandamoyi and her husband Krishnadayal, an ultra-strict Hindu. He himself sees in orthodox Hinduism and a revolt against Westernization the only means of saving India. His nationalism and idealism are both intense. But he is really neither an Indian, nor a Hindu, nor a Brahmin; he is the son of an Irishman, and his father was killed and his mother had died in the Mutiny. He is in ignorance of his parentage until the end of the book, and his position over and over again, reminds one of that of Oedipus. The theme is a fine one, and occasionally Mr. Tagore seems to be able to grasp and use it in order to mould his book into a work of art. But these moments of complete mastery are, I think, rare. The character of Gora is not a complete failure, but it is not a sufficiently solid success. It tends to become at the critical moments slightly melodramatic, and this has a peculiarly fatal effect upon the texture of Mr. Tagore's work.

LEONARD WOOLF

15 February, 1924

## THE NEW LEADER

p11(W)

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

#### An Indian Novel

**Gora.** By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan and Co. 7s. 6d.)

Why is it that India is still for most of us "a book with seven seals"? The fatalist answers that East is East. To my thinking there is a much simpler answer. There are no seals to this book. We shall read it one day, but first of all the book must be translated for us. Half a century ago Russia seemed to our grandfathers as inscrutable and undecipherable as India. Gradually, as her great literature was opened to us, we learned to read the life and character of the Russian people with Russian eyes. From Gogol to Gorky, from Tolstoy to Tchekov, a long succession of artists of genius have painted this strange world for us. It has become familiar to us as comedy and tragedy, as anecdote and romance. Its types, its humours, its problems, are at last as legible for us as the "Pickwick Papers" or the Barchester novels.

The self-revelation of India is beginning in its turn. Tagore is the first interpreter who has commanded our attention. We have had poems and plays and short stories from his pen. Here, at length, in "Gora" is the best of his novels of Bengali life. One may apply two standards to such a book. One may attempt to judge it as a work of art, or one may welcome it simply as a medium through which the life and thought of India are revealed. The canons which we apply to it, if we criticise it as a novel, are inevitably Western canons.

If an Englishman had written this book, there are several judgments which most of us would have passed on his work with a good deal of confidence. It is very long. It consists mainly of young Indians, men and women, try to adjust their minds to the problems of nationality and religion, custom and caste and convention. It has, indeed, a romantic plot. There are even a few chapters which deal with external events and scenes which

can be pictured. The climax has immense dramatic possibilities. Yet one feels that in Tagore the romantic plot is a concession to the weakness of the reader. The drama, which might have been poignant and moving, is slightly handled in a few hurried pages. All this may detract in our English eyes from the value of the book as a novel. The theme is not treated as a great Western artist would have treated it. The values, the emphasis, the lighting of the picture are not what our standards require. But may it not be an impertinence to apply such standards at all? In this intense concentration on the inner life of thought, in this comparative contempt for scenery and events and drama, have we not the most precious and natural expression of the Indian mind? We should not welcome in an Indian painter the technique of Paris or South Kensington. Why should we expect in an Indian novel a sense of the dramatic which may be peculiarly European?

The world which Tagore has described for us is that of two sharply contrasted intellectual circles in Calcutta in the early 'eighties of last century. On the one hand is the tiny enlightened circle of the Brahmo Somaj, the reforming rationalist sect, which was to Orthodox Hindooism what the Unitarians were to the Christian churches of the last century. We meet this section the home of a saintly old man, whose spirited and well-educated daughters have grown up free from the tyranny and narrowness of life behind the veil. This little church has its mystics and its bigots, its thinkers and its gossips, who are sketched for us not without a certain humour. Into this select half-Western circle there suddenly stray by accident two youths, who represent Hindoo nationalism in its early and most passionate form. They stand for the revolt against all that is English. They are able, cultivated, and well-read, but their rebellion against the West has made them Conservatives and anti-rationalists. They are ready to defend casts. They are punctual in their observance of "superstitions" and ritual. In their love of India they will reject nothing that is Indian. They can state their conservative creed with an almost Hegelian subtlety. They fall, however, to arguing with the charming daughters of this rationalist Brahmo

home. The results are complicated and subtle. Starting with the belief that love, as they have read of it in English poetry, is an immoral Western degradation, each of them, struggling against nature and barely guessing what the dangerous symptoms mean, proceeds to fall very thoroughly in love. The result is shattering to their own orthodoxy, for these girls are outside their system of caste. But the Brahmo girls (or rather the elder of them) undergo, in their turn, an equally subtle change, and come under the spell of the new romantic Hindoo nationalism. It turns out, however that Gora, the proudest of the Brahmin youths, is no Brahmin at all, nor even an Indian, but a foundling, of English or Irish race, rescued with his dying mother in the Mutiny by a childless Indian woman, who reared him as her own. His discovery of the truth, at the very end of the book, cuts abruptly across the struggle between his love and his creed. Little is made, however, of this romantic theme, and one rather resents its introduction as an irrelevance in the working out of a series of very curious and subtle psychological problems.

Tagore's novel may be a puzzling and imperfect thing, if one regards it as an artistic achievement, but it leaves behind it, none the less, a wonderful series of - what shall I call them? Not portraits. Regarded as portraits, these studies of Hindoo men and women are slight and vague. Not impressions, for they do not depict a man or woman seen suddenly and sharply in some moment of crisis. They are rather visions of the Indian soul in certain attitudes. It kneels in prayer, like some gaunt saint in an early Flemish painting. Or with gentle and patient wisdom it rises above the triviality and intolerance of sects. Again, in a male and militant shape, it revolts against the degradation of a foreign conquest. Or else, incarnate in a woman, it understands by love the problems which theology and custom have made intricate and abstruse. If Thomas a Kempis had written a novel, it might have been something like this gracious and beautiful book of Tagore's.

H.N.B.

23 February, 1924

**THE WEEKLY WESTMINSTER**

p534-535 (W)

### **EASTERN GLAMOUR**

"Gora" By Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan.) 7s. 6d net.

Rabindranath Tagore's novel begins with an accident to a four-wheeled cab. From this unpropitious vehicle the heroine descends. Her name has been changed from Radharani to Sucharita, but she is frequently called Didi. The old man who is in the cab with her is Paresch chandra Bhattacharya, Paresch Babu for short; while the young man outside whose house the accident takes place is Binoy-bhusan Chatterji, affectionately named Binu. Russian fiction has prepared us to some extent for this sort of thing; but there are things in "gora himself, for instance, whose real name, by the way, is Gournahan [sic]:

He was outrageously white, his complexion unmellowed by even the slightest touch of pigment,

Rabindranath Tagore tells us a little discourteously:

He was nearly six feet tall, with big bones and fists like the paws of a tiger. The sound of his voice was so deep and rough that you would be startled if you suddenly heard him call out, "Who is there?" His face seemed needlessly large and excessively strong, the bones of his jaws and chin being like the massive bolts of a fortress. He had practically no eyebrows, his forehead sloping broadly to the ears. His lips were thin and compressed, his nose projecting over them like a sword. His eyes, small but keen, seemed to be aimed at some unseen object like the point of an arrow, yet able to turn in a flash to strike something near at hand.

After this one is perhaps not surprised to learn that "Gourmohan was not exactly good-looking, but it was impossible to overlook him, for he would have been conspicuous in any company." One can well believe it.

Gourmohan is the chairman of the Hindu Patriots' Society. He is so determined to infuse pride and

self-respect and love of India into his countrymen that he regards criticism of any of their customs as evil. He becomes more orthodox than the orthodox. Even his father, who 'carried a brass pot in the manner of ascetics ... and actually had a part of the house reserved specially for his own use, calling it the 'Hermitage,' and going the length of displaying the name on a signboard," remonstrated with Gora on his orthodoxy. But Gora longed to cast away "all his prejudices, and, standing on a level with the common people of his country, to say with all his heart: 'I am yours and you are mine.'"

He became exceedingly difficult to live with. When his elder brother Mohim, whom he had always despised, came into the room, he insisted upon standing in token of respect. As for his mother, he refused to eat with her because she kept a Christian servant, though the woman had nursed him when he was a baby, and saved him in a dangerous illness. He even made his friend Binu refuse to eat in her room. But Binu had a less uncompromising temperament than Gora. His orthodoxy gave him no happiness. When he went home to his lodgings, in his thoughts he called her "Mother," and said, "No Scripture shall prove to me that food from your hand is not nectar for me":

In the silence of the room the steady ticking of the big clock could be heard, and Binoy felt it unbearable to stay there. Near the lamp a lizard on the wall was catching insects. Binoy watched it for a little and then got up, seized his umbrella, and went out.

The simple truth about this novel is that it is too foreign. We could accustom ourselves in Chekhov to finding, if we were hungry in the night, a cold chicken on the windowsill, but we cannot accustom ourselves to this mixture of hackney carriages, umbrellas, and lizards on the wall. If a room is properly turned out before breakfast, as the Colonel's Lady said, you do not find a cobra behind the sofa cushions.

"Gora" is really too disconcerting. Its theme is caste, and caste is a thing a Westerner cannot take seriously. It is true that there are conventions in this country; but even a woman who puts on a hat before eating her lunch does not thereby become indifferent to ordinary sympathies and affections. The first thing one has to do in reading this book is to perform a

mental readjustment by means of which the gentleman who could not sit down when he was tired without a piece of buttered toast to sit down on, would appear a tragic rather than a comic figure.

Once this is done it is impossible to follow the fortunes of Gora and Binoy, Sucharita and Lolita, the daughters of Paresch Babu with a mild interest. Paresch Babu is the head of a broad-minded sect of India, the Brahmo Samaj, which ignores caste, and permits its women the degree of freedom that English women enjoy. They eat what they like, go to circuses, and shake the hands of strangers. Lolita and Binoy fall in love, and decide to marry. The question is: shall Binoy join the Brahmo Samaj or shall Lolita become a Hindu?

The difficulty is solved by a compromise on both sides. The marriage shall be according to Hindu rites but there shall be no idol. Gora is very angry with Binoy for his weakness, but a downfall is in store for him. His father is taken ill, and, fearing death, tells Gora the true story of his birth. Gora is not a Hindu. He is a foundling. His mother died when he was born. His father was an Irishman. This will account to English readers for peculiarities of his character and appearance. Gora thereafter makes submission to Paresch Babu and to

the Deity who belongs to all, Hindu, Mussulman, Christian and Brahmo alike—the doors of whose temple are never closed to any person of any caste whatever. He who is not merely the God of the Hindus, but who is the God of India herself.

He then goes home and asks his mother, who has been throughout the book the personification of tolerance and sweetness, to tell her Christian serving-glass to get him a glass of water.

"Gora" is an admirable piece of propaganda against bigotry, though whether it is likely to bring its lesson home to over-orthodox Hindus who do not happen to be really Irishmen with outrageously white complexions, unmellowed by pigment, is another matter. Its appeal for English readers will be its queerness rather than its charm. Indian life has never been displayed before with so intimate a knowledge, and though Indian life in the present book appears to consist almost exclusively of religious arguments, and the colours in which it is portrayed

are of the quietest, the incidental revelation of thought and custom is startling. No one who is interested in religious questions should fail to read it. To others it may seem like a debate on Sunday Travelling between Robert Elsmere and Mr. Faichild.

SYLVIA LYND.

28 February, 1924

## THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

p126(W)

### NEW NOVELS

#### GORA

The title of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's new novel, *GORA*. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net) is taken from its leading character. Gora, whose real name is Gourmohan Babu, is an Irishman who, being left an orphan at birth, is adopted by a Hindu family and has been brought up on strictly Hindu lines. He is striking fair among his dark companions, whence the nickname Gora, meaning white, and he is endowed with a big frame and a leonine voice. What is bred in the bone will out in the flesh; and so Gora, in his impetuous, masterful way, sets about the regeneration of India by challenging society and the Government. Ignorant of his origin, he is more Hindu than the Hindus. He is deeply moved by the wrongs of "his country"; but, while the injustice of the British Government and its Indian employees rouses his indignation, he is not less impressed by the want of unity and moral force brought about by the existing Indian social structure. In striking contrast to the masterful Irish-Hindu is the soft pliable Bengali youth Binoy, an M.A. of Calcutta University, fully equipped with modern learning but afraid to take or not to take any action, including the choice of a bride, without the approbation of his friend.

The story is thrown upon the background of two families, in one of which the man is strictly orthodox while the wife, Anandamoyi, Gora's adoptive mother, though professedly Hindu, has broken loose from the fetters of caste. The other is Brahmo Samaj family. The chief interest centres in the two girls, Sucharita and Lolita, who, as was to be ex-

pected, become the wives of Gora and Binoy. Their unorthodox conduct, encouraged in moderation by a wise father, is a scandal to the neighbours. They appear in public, they converse with the young men, they open a school of girls, and even travel alone - in short they do everything that orthodoxy forbids them to do, even to the acceptance of food and water from lower castes. It is, however, quite clear that the author's sympathies are with the gentle Anandamoyi and the amiable Sucharita rather than with the bigoted old man or with the aggressively militant Brahmo lady.

Why did Sir Rabindranath choose to make hero an Irishman? The leading motif of the story, which must be fully grasped if the book is to be intelligible, is the conflict between orthodox Hinduism and the Brahmo Samaj, which abhors idolatry and denounces caste, professing esoteric doctrines alone. Sir Rabindranath condemns the bigotry of both. If religion does not consist of the scrupulous observances of caste rules, as typified by the widow Haramohini, neither is it the monopoly of a particular sect as preached by the blustering and arrogant Haran. True religion is exemplified by Gora, whose extreme orthodoxy can yet give way to human sympathy is merged in a larger love of humanity. We may, then, hazard the conjecture that what the author had in mind was that religion (meaning to him the highest form of Hinduism) depends neither on caste nor on race. The white man, who, though a Brahman by education, has of course no caste, is as capable of this true religion as the most orthodox Hindu or the most advanced Brahmo.

We ought not in fairness to apply English standards to a novel written in Bengali for Bengalis any more than to Russians. To the English reader, unfamiliar with the conditions of India and her social problems, it may seem unnatural that two youths fresh from college should plunge at once whoever they meet into long and rather wearisome arguments about the regeneration of India and the social evils that hamper it. But to the Hindu of today these things are very living questions. He is by nature reflective and introspective, and his main obsessions are religion and political freedom. Sir Rabindranath Tagore is a thinker before he is a novelist, and his book is in character.

4 April, 1924

**BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE**

p4c5(D)

**Section: BOOK REVIEWS****TAGORE AS REALIST**

**"GORA". By Sir Rabindranath Tagore.**  
(Macmillan. 7s. 6d.)

It would be difficult to imagine two novelists more dissimilar than Kipling and Tagore. Yet the denouement of this Indian novel will recall to many readers that of Kipling's story "Namgay Doola". In both the fervent patriot turns out to be not pure Indian, but half-Irish!

Tagore's treatment is much more detached than in any of his other work. The conflict between old and new forces is presented with insight and impartiality, and a fine sense of drama. There are many cross-currents - as, for instance, the struggle is one character between religion and love - but purpose is never allowed to mummify story. Tagore, one feels, has come down from the heights to a quiet realism. His success in this new manner is remarkable.

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14 July, 1924

**THE TIMES**

p12c4(D)

**Section: THE THEATRES**

Three short Indian plays by Sir Rabindranath Tagore and the hermitage scene of *Sakuntala* will be given on July 24 and 26 in Lord Leverhulme's garden at the Hill, Hampstead. The performances have been arranged by the Union of East and West (hon. secretary, 109, Park Lane, N.16).

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17 July, 1924

**THE STAGE**

p11(W)

**Indian Plays**

The Union of East and West is arranging two open-air performances of Tagore's plays in Lord Leverhulme's Garden, Hampstead, on July 24 and 26 at 4pm. During the last three years the society confined its activities to America, and opened branches in New York, Washington, and Boston. In the event of rain, the plays will be presented in Lord Leverhulme's ballroom. The cast includes Miss Meyna MacGill, Miss Florence Saunders, Miss Colette O'Neil, Mr Gordon Bailey, Mr Henry Oscar, and Mr Chandra Nath. Further particulars can be obtained from the hon. secretary, Miss Margaret G. Mitchell, 109, Park Lane, N16.

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2 August, 1924

**THE GRAPHIC**

p177(W)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S  
PLAYS IN LONDON  
ENACTED IN LORD LEVERHULME'S  
LOVELY GARDENS**

During the ten years of its existence in England the Union of East and West has arranged performances in London and other cities of upwards of thirty plays of ancient and modern India. Last week, on Thursday and Saturday, the Union gave a further proof of its activities in presenting in English a further set of Indian plays by Rabindranath Tagore, along with the Hermitage scene from *Sakuntala*, by Kalidasa, the Indian Shakespeare. The performances took place in the charming gardens of The Hill Lord Leverhulme's residence, which afforded a delightful setting.

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## RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S PLAYS IN LONDON

### ENACTED IN LORD LEVERHULME'S LOVELY GARDENS



THE BARRIER OF CASTE  
Queen Rani won't accept Princess Anna as daughter



A MOTHER PLEADING WITH HER SON  
Kunti and Karna in "The Deserted Mother"



A MATTER OF MOMENT  
Karna and Duryodhan in "The Farewell"



ADMIRING THE LILLIES IN THE GOLDEN POOL: A PICTURESQUE INCIDENT IN ONE OF THE PLAYS



SAKUNTALA LEAVING THE HERMITAGE FOR HUSBAND'S PALACE



PRINCE AFRAID OF MOTHER IN "THE MOTHER'S PRAYER"

During the ten years of its existence in England the Union of East and West has arranged performances in London and other cities of upwards of thirty plays of ancient and modern India. Last week, on Thursday and Saturday the Union gave a further proof of its activities in presenting in

English a further set of Indian plays by Rabindranath Tagore, along with the Hermitage scene from Sakuntala by Kalidasa, the Indian Shakespeare. The performances took place in the open in the charming gardens of the Lord Leverhulme's House, which attracted a large audience.

22 August, 1924

## PUBLIC OPINION

p175(W)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND THE PROBLEM OF THE DAY

#### HE TOLD THE JAPANESE THAT THE PROBLEM OF TO-DAY IS NOT WEALTH BUT THAT OF TRUE HAPPINESS THAT COMES FROM WITHIN

"While I am writing this article I am looking out over the China Sea from the island of Hong-Kong towards Japan. A cable has just been received from the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, that he is on his way to meet me here on the Japanese steamer called "Suwa Maru" and that he, has booked my passage to Singapore. He will not therefore stay in South China as he has intended. There has come from Tokyo this morning a very beautiful account of the poet's visit there, which I wish to share with the readers of 'Young India'. It will delight them, as it has delighted me."

- C. F. ANDREWS.

#### A Moving Salutation

"IT first records his meeting with Mr. Mitsuru Toyama, who is one of the most venerated men in Japan, because of his chivalrous character and courtesy. When they met, these two venerate men stood still in silence for a moment. Then Mr. Toyama bowed several times, after the Japanese manner of profound salutation while the poet after the Hindu fashion held his hands joined together and kept his eyes closed all the while in prayer.

"It was the meeting of the Grand Old Man of Japan with one from India; and a solemn silence fell on the assembled multitude, as though they had been present at a net of worship. The two countries of the East seemed to be cemented together in the bond of love by the ceremony.

#### Send us Wise Men

"On the previous occasion in Japan, when giving a lecture, the poet had spoken about the anti-Asiatic immigration measure and the people assembled had expected him to continue to speak on that subject,

which is the burning topic of the day in Japan and indeed throughout the whole of the Far East. But he took a far higher theme. He recalled the Japanese back to their own souls. The chairman in his opening words had said to him feelingly:

"Your presence here to-day is a joy to us, because your teachings have made us pause and think. They have entered into our souls. In days gone by your India did this same invaluable service to Japan. Your India can do it again for us. Send us more of your philosophers and we shall remain your infinite debtors'.

#### Problem of Life

"The poet replied to this in remarkable words: 'Last time, when I came to Japan about eight years ago, I was nervous for your future. I was nervous at the wholesale external imitation and at the lack of spirituality. To-day there is an enormous difference. You have progressed in the way of the spirit, and this gives me exceeding joy. You have asked me for wise men to come from India to teach you; but you have your own wise men and you must not neglect them as you have done too often in the past, in your admiration of the West, nor should they hide their light. You must realise that your spiritual awakening, which is the only true happiness, cannot come from outside. It cannot come from the West or from any other quarter. It must come from your inner self, from within. **The problem of life to-day is not the problem of amassing material wealth, but of true happiness - the happiness that comes from within.** This has been the bedrock of the philosophy of the East. This has been your own philosophy also. Be not ashamed of the religion of the soul which Asia has held sacred all these centuries. Be not ashamed at your own spiritual ideals. The need for you now is self-emancipation. This is the need for every one on this earth, to emancipate self from the gross dross of transient pleasures, which destroy the true happiness that springs from within'.

#### We Must Serve the Poor

"The poet then went on to talk about the poor, and his voice rang out with a challenge:

"We must serve those who have served us. That is the law of human existence, which can never be violated with impunity. The poor have served us. It is our turn to serve them. My ambition in life is to repay them in whatever way I can; to illuminate their life with some beauty; to bring rays of happiness into their existence. If the best things of life remain only in the hands of the few fortunate, then civilisation is starved and the age in which we live is doomed. This injustice towards the poor, from generation to generation, has now reached its climax. There is unrest everywhere. The whole world is divided into two camps, the rich and the poor, the satisfied and the dissatisfied, the toilers and the leisured classes. There is no peace in sight so long as these inhuman divisions continue.

"You have asked me to bring wise men to you. Wise men are not so plentiful. But I would like to bring to you in Japan, if only I could do so, the poor of India, my own Indian poor; and I would like you to bring to India your own poor of Japan. For if the poor in every land could get into touch with one another, the countries of the world would understand and sympathy would be possible. For it is through the children that the Kingdom of God can best be brought on earth'.

"The poet concluded by saying, that he did not wish to be honoured for himself. He was too old for that kind of thing to have any attraction for him. But he hoped, through his visits all over the world, to sow seeds that would create a brotherhood between man and man.

### Song of the Defeated

"This speech which was given at a gathering of some of the wealthiest people in Japan had created a very great impression of friendliness and goodwill towards India and has raised the thought of India in the minds of the Japanese people at this critical time, when Japan has been stirred as never before by her exclusion from America.

"Last time when the poet visited Japan, he was rejected. After a first outburst of welcome, later one, when he gave his message truly and sincerely, and spoke of the things of the spirit, the whole newspaper press turned round upon him and warned the Japanese people not to listen to him, because

he was the 'poet of defeated nation'. It was then that he wrote the 'Song of the Defeated'.

"My master has bid me, while I stand at the roadside, sing the song of defeat; for that is the bride whom He woos in secret.

"She has put on the dark veil, hiding her face from the crowd; but the jewel glows on her breast in the dark.

"She is forsaken of the day, and God's night is waiting for her with its lamps lighted and its flowers wet with dew.

"She is silent with eyes downcast; she has left her home behind her. From her home has come that wailing in the wind.

"But the stars are singing the love-song of the Eternal to a face so sweet with shame and suffering

"The door has been opened in the lonely chamber. The call has sounded. And the heart of the darkness throbs because of the coming tryst."

"It is an inexpressible joy to learn that the heart of Japan has turned back to the Indian poet, and instead of rejecting him has been saying to him, in so many words; 'Come again. Come again soon! And send others from India with the same message'.

"At this same gathering in Tokyo the poet announced that, after his return to India, he had been called once more to go out on his world-wanderings in order to give the message of his country. This next time he intends, if his purpose holds good, to go to Italy and from thence to South America. That, at least, is the prospect now before him".

7 October, 1924

**THE TIMES**

p13c7(D)

### Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore arrives in Jerusalem today to lecture at the Hebrew University. He will be guest of Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner for Palestine.

20 October, 1924

**THE TIMES**

p13c7(D)

**Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore is sailing from Cherbourg for America to attend the celebration of the Centenary of the Independence of the Latin-American Republics.

24 December, 1924

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p10c4(D)

**GROWING HATRED BETWEEN  
HINDUS & MOSLEMS**

**EMBITTERED FEELINGS**

**SIR R. TAGORE'S APPEAL**

**FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT**

**ALLAHABAD, Tuesday.**

Throughout the Punjab and the United Provinces communal relations, as the result of the Kohat and Lucknow riots, have become more embittered than for years past. Mr. Gandhi continues his fast, and Mr. Mohamed Ali addresses impassioned appeals for large-hearted toleration and greater forbearance, but Hindus and Mohammedans are deaf to all but their mutual fears. Each community accuses the other of being blameworthy for the riots; each puts forward unveracious accounts of the rioting and the origin thereof, initiated by their utter inability to recognise their own shortcomings or the possibility of any other viewpoint, or the salient fact that the immediate spark which fired the train was less important than infallible material ready, at the slightest provocation, to burst into conflagration.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the famous poet, has addressed wise counsel to his countrymen, but his

words are likely to pass unheeded amid the turmoil of communal and political feelings. He says:

I have no faith in fasts, but Mr Gandhi is sincere, as everyone knows. He is trying to bring about Hindu-Moslem unity. That unity cannot be achieved in a day. Hindus and Moslems have been cutting each other's throats for centuries. I am not blaming either Hindus or Moslems, there is a poison in both communities. The present outbreak of Moslems against Hindus is the reaction consequent on the Khilafat agitation, and I prophesied at the time of the Khilafat agitation that the reaction would soon come and that when it came it would be severe. Indians have nothing to do with Khilafat, but nobody heeded my warning.

It is noteworthy that even Sir Rabindranath Tagore assumes that the Moslems are the aggressors.

Inflammatory versions of the events at Kohat are embittering Hindu feeling in the Punjab cities. Certain Hindu victims have arrived at Amritsar from Kohat, and their stories of their sufferings at the hands of the Mohammedans have excited the Hindus. At Nagpur feeling is still running high, and the Mohammedans have decided that no music of any kind shall be allowed to pass the mosque, as it indicates disrespect to the house of God. Sixty Hindus and thirty-six Mohammedans have been arrested in connection with the recent riots.

Lucknow remains an armed camp, and troops are patrolling the city, but the Chehlum festival passed off quietly, and the processions were not molested. The Swarajist organ, *Indian Daily Telegraph*, declares: "I have no faith in the leaders of the conferences convened at Delhi by telegram, and adds: "So far, the secret of the solution is in the trigger of the British soldier's rifle. We have seen no other solution." Yet the journal deliberately shuts its eyes to the obvious moral, and seeks to discredit the British administration, which alone stands between India and anarchy, by declaring: "The Kohat tragedy ought ever to brand the administration under which it has happened as an abject failure," the presumption being that under Swaraj such disturbances would be impossible!

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***Period 1925-1928***

**Italian episode**



1925

21 January, 1925

**THE TIMES**

p13c7(D)

**Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived at Genoa from South America, and will give a series of lectures in Italy, the first of which will be held at Milan tomorrow night.

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8 July, 1925

**THE EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS**

p8c13(D)

**TAGORE'S MYSTICISM**

Many of us know little or nothing of Indian poetry or culture, but most of us at least heard of Rabindranath Tagore. As an introduction to Tagore's system of thought, an excellent booklet is published by Messrs R.H.Allenson Ltd., London at 1s. It is called "An introduction to Tagore's Mysticism", by Sybil Baumer, and contains a series of extracts from the poet's works, with a running commentary.

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9 July, 1925

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p465(W)

**TAGORE**

A fair amount of Tagore's dramatic poetry is of tenuous substance. The saints and heroes of his plays are often lacking in recognizable human

qualities because they embody a legendary idealism. The symbolism of their thoughts and actions, however, sometimes atones for the weakness or insignificance of the dramatist's actual theme. But it is frankly difficult to make anything of the symbolism of "Red Oleanders". It is a short play written in rather undistinguished prose in which Tagore seems to depend on the very vagueness of his style for whatever the meaning of his drama can support. For the greater part of the time, it is quite impossible to discover what is happening. Scarcely a single indication of time or place is given, there is not the faintest attempt to present the few scattered and mysterious events in a logical sequence, and not the least hint of characterisation is allowed to obtrude upon the various thoughts and aspirations of Nandini, Bishu, the professor, Gosain, and the bewildering voice. There is, it is true, a touch of irony in the complacency of preacher Gosain - at least, it is reasonable to suppose that Tagore has intended to make a satirical figure of him. But, with this possible exception, the characters of the play are sufficiently lifeless to compel one to wonder what intellectual or moral purpose they can possibly serve. Moreover, it can hardly be said that the drama is conducted on a spiritual plane which dispenses with the need for verisimilitude. Many of the lofty utterances of Nandini and the Voice are devoid of meaning that one is constantly aware of the emptiness of such symbols as the tassel of Oleanders, the network in front of the Palace, and the caves of Yaksha Town.

The most acute of Tagore's literary failings is perhaps a rather unbridled passion for metaphor. In "Red Oleanders" the profusion of metaphor is particularly trying. Now and again there is a happy phrase or image, but the constant stream of picturesque likenesses incurs an obvious suspicion. It is to be feared that Tagore has been far more occupied with mere words than it is the business of either of the dramatist or the poet to be. The entire dialogue is persistently sententious. But it is not profound. Such lines as: "I must either gather or scatter. I can feel no pity for what I do not get. Breaking is a fierce kind of getting," leave the reader both unimpressed and regretful.

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10 July, 1925

**AYRSHIRE POST**

p2c4(D)

**Section : BOOKS AND REVIEWS**

**Tagore's Mysticism**

In her "Introduction to Rabindranath Tagore's Mysticism" (London: Allenson Ltd., 1s) Miss Sybil Baumer expresses the view that the mystical sense, which is present in all of us in varying degrees, may be developed and that those who would develop it could hardly do better than study Tagore's poetry. Numerous quotations are given from various works of the great Indian poet in illustration of his attitude to various phases of life, which were the subject of comment. Miss Baumer has undertaken her task with enthusiasm, and there is virtue in that quality this little book reflects it. Her comments are rather the ardours of the enthusiast than the analyses of the critic.

18 July, 1925

**THE NATION AND THE ATHENAEUM**

p490(W)

[The following report is the opening paragraph of the review of Earl of Ronaldshay's book "THE HEART OF ARYAVARTA" by Oliver.]

There is a legend that when Rabindranath Tagore last visited England he was invited to meet a distinguished Cambridge philosopher (the catholicity and versatility of whose genius have recently inspired Mr. Max Beerholm to immortalize his physiognomical lineaments). Late into the summer night they sauntered with their attentive host in the gardens of the King's College, the Western sage unweariedly illuminating with the dry brilliance of the scientific intelligence the nebulous universe of Eastern imagination - interpreting, explaining, and exhibiting in their rational aspects its naive vagaries. Himself enchanted and dazzled, the host was not surprised when, as they quitted the lime-scented groves, Tagore, his countenance glowing with appreciation, thanked his companions for an excep-

tional evening. He had rarely experienced one more delightful. But the fellow of King's woke suddenly in the small hours, perturbed by an inward whisper that the exquisite courtesy and unruffled receptiveness of the poet's demeanour in the symposium had not shown the responsive fervour of true dialectical interchange; and at breakfast he pressed him for some explicit criticism on the general effect of the argument. "The truth is", answered Tagore, "that, in that hallowed enclosure, I quickly passed into the second state of consciousness, and experienced absorbing apprehensions. I do not remember a word of what the professor said, though my ears listened intently, and appreciated his facility in his method. But it was all entirely irrelevant to the important matters of life and devoid of scientific discernment of demonstrably accessible facts."

This legend might serve as a parable of the situation of British Rule in India; and the great value and opportuneness of such books as Lord Ronaldshay's "The Heart of Aryavarta", ....

22 July, 1925

**DUBLIN EVENING MAIL**

p2c3(DE)

**RED OLEANDERS.** By Rabindranath Tagore, London, Macmillan and Co., 5s. net.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore's "Red Oleanders" is called "A Drama in One Act". It is drama in which vague, shadowy figures indecisively male or female, meander through the pages, uttering, pseudo-Maeterlinckian platitudes. There is a character called Ranjan, who appears to be of some importance, but since there is no certitude that he has ever done anything, or if he has, that it has any bearing upon the play and as he never appears upon the stage, the reader is left completely in the dark as to his significance. There is a professor, too - but of what, is not stated; there is a governor, an assistant governor, and a King, all of undefined nationality, who all from time to time murmur vague, meaningless sentences, and then fade away. There is no list of dramatist personae, so that the quantities and even sex, of the performers must be inferred

In short, if the play has any significance at all, it has eluded us. Maeterlinck's "Les Aveugles" was crystal clear in comparison.

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23 July, 1925

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p3c6(D)

**Section : BOOKS OF THE DAY**

**TAGORE**

To dislike at sight what we cannot understand without effort is a detestable habit of Anglo-Saxons, and one which should be fought against ruthlessly. But those Britishers in whom there is even the slightest admixture of Celtic blood are apt to go to the other extreme, and profess to love the mystic and the obscure just because they do not understand it.

The reading public will, therefore, probably be divided in their estimate of "Red Oleanders," a drama in one act, by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan 5s.). Some will detest it, others will find subtle and cosmic meanings in its really rather undistinguished prose.

Frankly, it could be made to mean almost anything. Mr. Tagore is too serious a writer to be suspected of publishing absolute nonsense on purpose, so one must suppose that he did it by accident. Presumably he is able to follow the workings of his own brain, and it would be very interesting to hear from him just what it is all about.

Broadly, we suppose, it is an allegory against commercialism. There are men who were only numbers digging gold from the earth, there are Governors to keep them at work, there is a sort of state priest to quell strikes and lull discontent with pious talk of an official sort. There is a voice behind a net, belonging to a great King, and there is Nandini who is beautiful (and very obscure), who presumably represents Imagination, Beauty, Dreams, Nature - all the anti-commercial side of life - to put it synthetically. But what exactly is Bishu, and what is Ranjan?

To be all effective an allegory of this kind ought at least to be fairly intelligible, and simpler it is the better. Failing intelligibility and simplicity it should at least be written in beautiful language. In this instance Mr. Tagore's language is pedestrian and almost at times, platitudinous. It is never inspired, and to call "Red Oleanders" a drama is to stretch that oft-abused word beyond its farthest limits. A series of conversations, perhaps, but they are not in any sense dramatic

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23 July, 1925

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c2(D)

**RED OLEANDERS. A Drama in One Act. By Rabindranath Tagore, 5s. net. London: Macmillan.**

It has been said that one of the methods advocated by Japanese playwrights for brightening up the drama is to get the audience to take some actual part in the performance. This characteristic production of the Indian playwright whose pieces are sometimes written in Indian and then translated in English, seems constructed on a converse principal. Its text shows no trace of the confusion often brought about by renderings from one language into another, but its characters come on and go off the stage without doing anything that forms a plot with exposition, development and *denouement*, while their dialogue, always visionary so far as the principle figure is concerned, points to an action going on in the inner life of all. The Indians are looking for the coming of a king that will deliver them. The woman seen whose imagery takes inspiration from her view of natural sights, such as plumes of oleanders, also expects the coming of the promised king; and the professors, doctors, and local authorities are in the quandary of apprehension. The king does come but goes away again, and it becomes relatively clear that the last word of the charming puzzle is to be found not here but in contemplative meditation.

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24 July, 1925

**THE CHURCH TIMES**

p97(W)

An introduction to Rabindranath Tagore's *Mysticism*, by Sybil Baumer (H.R. Allenson, 1s). "Mysticism", says the author in her opening sentence, "is difficult if not impossible to define". But since Dr. Inge Bramptons of 1899 so much has been written about it that this remark is getting rather trite. Pantheism has been called "materialism grown sentimental", and one cannot help being reminded of this definition by this booklet. Much that Tagore wrote is beautiful, but there is a cloying quality about his thought which is a little sticky to the average reader's taste. This is a slight but very appreciative sketch of the religious strain in his writings.

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27 July, 1925

**EAST ANGLICAN DAILY TIMES**

p7, 1 D

**THE BOOK LOUNGE**

**MODERN POETRY**

[This is a long review of half-a-dozen sixpenny parts of "The Augustan Books of Modern Poetry" published by Messrs Ernest Benn. The six poets represented in this first batch are Robert Bridges, Edmund Blunden, Rabindranath Tagore, Rupert Brooke, John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Only the relevant portion of the review is cited here.]

.... Concerning Mr. Tagore, we are informed in an interesting note that he is known to the west almost solely as a mystical poet. His present editor has tried to present sides of his versatile effort that are unrepresented in his own translations. "Such poems as 'Noon' and 'Sea-Waves', in the present selection show that this Indian is as observant and objective as the youngest of his Western contemporaries". The reason assigned for including his work in a series of selections from English poets of to-day is that he has made our language his own, and has added to our literature. Those who take the trouble to procure this selection from the works will agree that the inclusion

into series was perfectly justifiable. Here are some lines from "Sea-Waves":

Destruction swings and rocks on the lap of the shoreless sea.

In dreadful festival!

Clanging its hundred wings, the indomitable wind Rages and runs!

Sky and sea revel in mighty union,

Veiling the world's eye-lash in blackness!

The lightening starts and trembles, the waves foam in laughter -

The sharp, white dreadful mirth of brute Nature!

Eyeless, earless, homeless, loveless,

The drunken forces of evil

Have shattered all bonds, and are rushing wildly to ruin!

—

20 August, 1925

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p548(W)

**THE AUGUSTAN BOOKS OF ENGLISH POETRY. 83/4 X 53/4. JOHN KEATS. 31pp. PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. 31pp. ROBERT BRIDGES. 30pp. EDMUND BLUNDEN. 30pp. RABINDRANATH TAGORE. 31pp. RUPERT BROOKE. 27pp. HILAIRE BELLOC. 30pp. ERNEST BENN. 6d. n. each.**

If Messrs. Benn and the editor of this series of modern poetry are to be congratulated on their enterprise the poets (or their representatives) and the publishers who own the copyrights are no less deserving of thanks for the generosity that has made such enterprise possible. The series succeeds in giving an extraordinarily generous selection for small price charged, and these little books, with their attractive printing and general appearance, should have a large sale. That that sale should not be at the expense of the complete editions is provided for, so far as possible, by the commendable practice of printing, a brief bibliography giving the prices of the original editions; and it is much to be hoped that the foretaste of riches here made possible will send many readers to the complete works of the poet included in the series.

28 August, 1925

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p8c4 and p8c7(D)

[From p8c4]

**East and West**

IN a letter sent to us by Dr. RABINDRANATH TAGORE on the reception of his poetic play "Red Oleanders" an indictment, at once passionate and philosophical, is directed against the massive materialism of the Western world. The Indian, as Dr. TAGORE sees the case, is denied those personal relations with the European or the American which alone can sweeten life and keep humanity human. Instead, he feels the relentless pressure of an organised abstraction to whose shattering force science contributes a merciless momentum. But it is not the Orient alone that shudders under this menace, and if Dr. TAGORE thinks that sensitive and intelligent Europeans are complacent about the floundering of the new Leviathan, he is less than just. European literature and, to a rapidly increasing extent, American literature ring with the outcry of the little man swept away on a wave of forces that he did not fashion and cannot control. Since Antigone stood face to face with Creon the conflict of the one and the many has gone on and is now intensified by the multiplication of the many from the hundred to the hundred million. The ruler of the hundred million, be he autocrat or elected person, inevitably becomes an abstraction, and if the India Office sees a distant and chilly thing to India, so also seems Downing Street to an English voter. Oceans divide us from the East, and that aggravates undoubtedly the individual's sense of impotence, but the problem of Leviathan is, in its essence, the same for East and West. We share a common burden, and we should equally be at pains to prevent the organisation of man. We all of us, who take any thought for the Commonwealth, are seeking hooks to bind Leviathan. We can do it by doing our own thinking and making democratic institutions as responsive as may be to the matter of our thought. We can do it, again, by strengthening all those associations of goodwill or common beneficent purpose which cut across the boundaries of the nations and link men of one faith or craft or social aim. We can do it by personal courtesy to our fellow-Jacks in a giant-ravaged world. We can acknowl-

edge Dr. TAGORE'S grievance against a West which holds an East in fee, but we can assure him that we feel Leviathan's pressure on our own backs and are not all of us complacent under the load. He has dramatised humanity tormented by mass-forces, a glance at the modern European drama will show him that he has many companions in purpose as in practice. The last century liberated tremendous forces and left it for this one to control them. People are placed in subjection to things, more terribly perhaps in the East than in the West, but there is an increasing realisation of our plight. Dr. TAGORE is not alone in his dismay, nor is he alone in desiring a restatement of personal values in a wilderness of impersonal forces.

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[From p8c7]

**"RED OLEANDERS"**

**AUTHOR'S INTERPRETATION**

**To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian**

Sir, - Some few criticisms of my "Red Oleanders" that have appeared in the English papers have convinced me that to a considerable portion of my readers in England this play of mine seems obscure in meaning. Such a fact, I believe, almost always comes as a surprise to an author, because generally a work of this nature springs from a vision that is vivid to himself and a feeling that belong to his direct experience. It is not for me to discuss the literary qualities of this book, which belong to a mere translation, can have no pretension to a permanent place as literature in a language not the author's own. But I think in justice to myself, I should make it clear that it has a definite meaning which can legitimately claim literary expression.

There was a time when in the human world most of our important dealings with our fellow-beings were personal dealings, and the professional element in society was never hugely disproportionate to the normal constitution of its life. Therefore, naturally, in the tradition of literature, which is the ideal expression of man's life, interactions of human relationship have so long occupied the most important position.

To-day another factor has made itself immensely

evident in shaping and guiding human destiny. It is the spirit of organisation, which is not social in character but utilitarian. Christian Europe no longer depends upon Christ for her peace, but upon the League of Nations, because her peace is not disturbed by forceful individuals so much as by organised Powers. Naturally in all organisations variation of personality is eliminated, and the individual members in so far as they represent the combination of which they belong give expression to a common type and very little to their uniqueness of individuality.

But the personal man is not dead, only dominated by the organised man. The world has become the world of Jack and Giant – the giant who is not a gigantic man, but a multitude of men turned into a gigantic system.

I am not competent to say how Europe herself feels about this phenomenon produced by her science. Very likely her stout-hearted Jack is already busy making breaches in the walls of his fortress. But I can say on behalf of inarticulate Asia what a terrible reality the West is for us whose relation to ourselves is so little human. The view that we can get of her in our mutual dealings is that of a titanic power with an endless curiosity to analyse and know, but without sympathy to understand; with numberless arms to coerce and acquire, but no serenity of soul to realise and enjoy.

It is an organised passion of greed that is stalking abroad in the name of European civilisation. I know as to its character, and therefore the pity of it is all the greater when mainly this aspect of it is forcibly presented to us, causing the spread of dumb sadness over a vast portion of the world and the dread of a devastation of its future with an utterly bankrupt life. Such an objectified passion lacks the true majesty of human nature; it only assumes a terrifying bigness, its physiognomy blurred through its cover of an intricate network, the scientific system. It barricades itself against all direct human touch with barriers of race pride and prestige of power. The impersonal pressure which, from its aloofness, it applies to our living soul is enormous, over narrowing our prospect of growth, smothering the power of initiative in our mind.

Once people had either Akbar or Aurangzeb to deal with; now we have an organised avarice, frightfully simple in its purpose, mechanically compli-

cated in its process. Its messengers who come to us – Lord Birkenheads or Lord Curzons – are never for us our fellow-beings in flesh and blood, as were Julius Caesar and Antony, who could easily find their immortal places in Shakespeare's drama. They are abstractions, at once far and near, and therefore awful; they are obscure to us in the dark secrecy of their political laboratory and yet grimly concrete in their grasp upon our vitals.

Therefore it should cause no surprise to anybody if a poet belonging to a continent swallowed by the menacing shadow of Europe gives a prominent place among the *dramatis personae* of his play to an apparition which now so powerfully occupies the imagination of a vast world consisting of a non-Western races. It is not an individual, but a doom; and therefore it should never be compared to such characters as Lady Macbeth by those who wish to find a literary precedent. I am told that science has become a principal subject for some notable poets in Europe. It is natural, for science has permeated Western life; it no longer has its own cradle in the secluded cells of the learned. In a similar manner, the hungry purpose, having science for its steed, running about unchecked, trampling our life's harvest, is not an intellectual generalisation unfit for imaginative literature. It is intensely real; its hot breath is upon us; its touch is all over our shrinking soul. It is the principal hero to-day in the drama of human history; and I hope I have the right to invoke it in my own play, not in the spirit of a politician, but of a poet, possibly a lyrical poet.

I am glad to find that my critics readily acknowledge that Nadini, the heroine of the play, has definite features of an individual person. She is not an abstraction, but pursued by an abstraction, like one tormented by a ghost. And this is the drama. Nandini is real woman who knows that wealth and power are *maya*, and that the highest expression of life is in love, which she manifests in this play in her love for Ranjan. But love-ties are ruthlessly molested by megalomaniac ambition, while an acquisitive intellect plies its psychological curiosity, probing into the elusive mystery of love through vivisection.

I can assure my reader that I never meant to use this book as propaganda. It is a vision that has come to me in the darkest hour of dismay. I have

a stronger faith in the simple personality of man than in the prolific brood of machinery that wants to crowd it out. This personality - the divine essence of the infinite in the vessel of the infinite - has its last treasure-house in woman's heart. Her pervading influence will some day resort the human to the desolated world of man. As in the animal world the physically meek has to-day inherited the earth, woman will one day prove that the meek in soul, through the sure power of love, will rescue this world from the dominance of the unholy spirit of rapacity. The joy of this faith has inspired me to pour all my heart into painting against the background of black shadows - the nightmare of a devil's temptation - the portrait of Nandini as the bearer of the message of reality, the saviour through death.

- Yours, &c ,

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

**Santiniketan, August 5.**

*23 September, 1925*

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p7c2(D)

**SIXPENCE EACH**

**THE AUGUSTAN BOOKS OF POETRY, London:**  
**Ernest Benn. Seven booklets, 6d. each.**

At a time when it is generally felt that the anthologies are overdoing it, it is refreshing to see a firm of publishers striking a kind of anthology that is distinctive and worthwhile. In the "Augustan Books of English Poetry" and the "Augustan Books of Modern poetry" Messrs. Benn have done for individual poets what is usually reserved for the crowd or the group. As an anthology is the reader's chance of testing by tasting it should offer the fine flavour of the poet and nothing else, and so be distinguished from the "selection", which averages up. And that is precisely what the Augustan books do. The Keats and Shelley may well have been presented as a standard of comparison, for they abide no question. With the moderns it is different, from the Laureate down; and the value of these books is that they give the intelligent and

unprimed and unprejudiced reader something like the true measure of his man. He will understand why Dr. Bridges is Laureate; how Rupert Brooke is coming to be revalued, and revalued downwards, now that it is possible to disengage him from the enhancing atmosphere of the war; how Rabindranath Tagore, with poems like "Urvashi" and "Sea Waves", admirably translated in verse by Mr. Edward Thompson, who is largely responsible for the general selection of the series, is sure to rise from the intelligibly mistaken revaluation he has already suffered to a secure place among the Lyricists; how Mr. Belloc, with his "Hahnacker Mill" and his sonnet "When you to Acheron's ugly waters come", is more than a skilled technician, more than a ringing, stinging, epigrammatic satirist, more even than a finely tempered Dionysian celebrant of Sussex, and, last, how Mr Edmund Blunden in a year or two (it is only five since "The Waggoner" was published) has taken rank as unchallengeably chief of the modern poets who are first of all interpreters of nature. Altogether they are desirable books, and if the qualities are described, combined with the chastely ornate covers, the excellent printing and paper, the useful bibliographies and biographical notes, and the almost ironical price do not make every bookseller so is anybody their irresistible advocate he will be failing in his service to literature, to the public, and to himself.

**C.P.**

*13 September, 1925*

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p15c5(D)

**Section: BOOKS OF THE DAY.**

**PAGES IN WAITING**

**An Indian Author**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore said, sometime ago, that he would drop his title, but his publishers, the Macmillans, continue to use it in his books. They have a new one by him appearing soon under the

title, "Broken Ties and other stories." He has written a great deal of fiction in his native Bengali language, much of it short stories. His English books are chosen from this treasury, and knowing English intimately, he takes a keen interest in their translation. "Broken Ties" is what publishers call a "short-long" story, and other tales are actually short.

Lost Jewels," which introduces a characteristic theory on the influence of modernism in the relations between the sexes.

20 November, 1925

**THE BIRMINGHAM POST**

p5c2(D)

## INDIAN ROMANCE

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has an extraordinary insight into the individual life of his fellow countrymen. Amid all the diversities of a vast population, he wanders with close observation and deep sympathy, with the outlook of a poet, and of a prophet, with the keenest sense of realism, and yet with a suppressed idealism. Everywhere he is the artist, and though his subject-matter consists of the rendering into literary form of expressions of the lives and aspects of his own people, there is behind it all the humanism of the great thinker, who passes beyond the particular, the provincial, the local, and raises his fine impressions into the highest levels of noble aspiration and philosophical suggestiveness.

It is twelve years since Tagore received the award of the Nobel Prize and his hand loses none of its outstanding artistic skill. His new book "Broken Ties and Other Stories" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), is marked by the old sureness of touch, by the old economy of words, the old joy of psychological truth of representation, and the old deep sense of the spiritual values in the life of India. His work is wonderful in its revelation of the great human interest in so much of India's life, which but for his presentation would be meaningless or distressingly sordid to the Western mind. He comes to us as an interpreter on the highest plane. The longest of the short stories of this volume (125 pages) is an outstanding psychological study in atheism and in popular mysticism. The other half-dozen very short stories, altogether occupying 103 pages, are gems of psychological insight and of artistic expression. Tagore's writing is really fine work, and this volume is an excellent specimen.

11 November, 1925

**THE YORKSHIRE POST**

p4c3(D)

## Section: THE LIBRARY TABLE.

### TAGORE

The short stories of Sir Rabindranath Tagore are curiously reminiscent of the work of the Russian masters; not in style - for even in translation they preserve a fragile Orientalism faintly perfumed; not in method: there is none of that ruthless insight which builds up Dostoevsky's monumental analysis in minute and amazing detail, although a portraiture equally complex is achieved. Neither in style nor method; but in atmosphere. Who has not stopped in his first reading of Tchekov and considered the humour with suspicion? The pathos makes it seem incredible. So it is with Tagore; he has just the same sad smile in his prose. His new book "Broken Ties and other stories" (Macmillans, 7s. 6d) contains one tale which gives the volume its title, by far the longest and best; he has mastered the use of allusion, and is conceiving where Dostoevsky would fail through over-elaboration; the characters of Uncle Jagamohan and Damini are perfectly drawn. The story, moreover, has the merit of being just the right length. In comparison with "Broken Ties" the others are scarcely worth mentioning, but Russian and more definitely English ironies are well combined in "The

20 November, 1925

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p6c2(D)

also, published in **THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY** (27 November, 1925, p433)

**MR. TAGORE'S STORIES**

**BROKEN TIES AND OTHER STORIES**

By **Rabindranath Tagore**. London: Macmillan and CO. Pp. 22g. 7s. 6d. net.

There are seven stories here, but one of them takes up a good half of the volume. "Broken Ties" is a narrative that might be called simple, and yet there is a notable absence of the explicit. The spiritual history of Satish shows revolt in its most gracious forms. But the narrator says: "I realised that the world into which Satish had been transported had no place for me, his particular friend." You cannot be the friend of an ecstatic; at the most you are a part of humanity. The two young men become devotees of a "master" who "sought to keep Satish and myself content by repeatedly filling for us the cup of symbolism with the nectar of idea." To the more worldly of the two there is plethora of mystic emotion, and reverence must withstand the assaults of reason. But Satish, a sincere renegade, beginning as a reasonable "atheist," travels through emotion and attains "such simple peacefulness that no one could even guess what he believed or what he did not." He does, on one occasion, claim to be a poet; he declines all bonds of reason and he departs into some kind of formlessness into which one cannot follow him. There is a devoted woman, but she can only attend to his material needs; she is Mary condemned to the tasks of a Martha in a world remote from human appetites. There is some rally of humanity when the narrator marries the discarded woman.

It is difficult for the average Westerner to appreciate much of this; he dips into something that he cannot fathom. There should be a great future for Indian fiction; in a land of powerful conventions the conventions are being attacked. Mr. Tagore's story suggests rather the search for a philosophical basis that concern with political or social events. He has his ironies:

"Sect-mongers rejoice more in capturing adherents than in comprehending truths." The other stories are comparatively slight. They have the charm of a serenity of style even when this is under a burden of emotion. There is something of imaginative relation, something of disenchantment. The novel-reader may feel some lack of the positive, the specific.

A.N.M.

28 November, 1925

**THE OUTLOOK**

p361(V)

**Section: NEW BOOKS**

The Stories of Rabindranath Tagore depressed me even more heavily, until I began to fear that I was sickening for something. No; six of the seven stories in "Broken Ties" did not depress me. They are what Westerners call magazine stories, that is to say, they are trivial stuff dependent for their punch on the surprise in the last paragraph. But the title story, occupying half the book, is positively bad. It described a young man who seeks vaguely metaphysical Truth. He begins by being an extreme rationalist. He proceeds to join a heathen Salvation Army, and make an ass of himself to the clanks of cymbals. Eventually he abandons himself to a mysticism of the kind so much admired by Count Hermann Keyserling and such profound thinkers. "If I keep going on in the same direction along which He comes to me, then I shall only be going further and further away from Him. If I proceeding the opposite direction, then only can we meet. He loves form, so He is continually descending towards form. We cannot live by form alone, so we must ascend towards His formlessness." So Satish of the flaming eyes goes and sits on a sandbank. And the lady who is in love with him, dies of some pathetic disease. But I spare you the worst passages, those in which Tagore is satirically humorous.

30 November, 1925

**THE DAILY NEWS**

p4c3(D)

**COLOURED TALES**

**THE NEW TAGORE**

By **GERALD GOULD**

"Broken Ties and Other Stories." By Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 7s.6d.

[plus other four books of various authors reviewed in this column Only the relevant portion is included]

"Secondly, I had a rooted belief that atheists were worse than murderers, nay, worse than beef-eaters." It is very difficult for the Western reader to enter into the mind of a man who could write that seriously: it is doubly difficult to enter into the mind of a man who could write it satirically. For, if the ingenuousness of one civilisation is remote from that of another, how much more remote is its sophistication from that others!

The sentence with which I began is supposed to be written by Srivilas, a Brahman, about his friendship with Satish, but whether Rabindranath Tagore's tongue is in his cheek, or Srivilas's in his, and whether the former is pulling the latter's leg, or yours or mine, are matters which it would be presumptuous for the ignorant to pretend to determine. Still more puzzling is the letter which Jagamohan, the atheist, uncle of the atheist Satish, wrote to "some son-in-law of the family" who had addressed to him a letter with the formal "To the gracious feet of -." Jagamohan wrote:

Your use of the plural inflection to the word "feet," instead of the dual, may denote special reverence on your part (because there are animals with four feet which have your particular veneration), but I consider it my duty to disabuse your mind of all errors concerning my own zoological identity.

Is this theological argument, or heavy humour? Nay, if it is a humour, have we the right to call it "heavy," simply on the ground that it would be so if an Englishman wrote it?

Seriousness is scarcely easier than jocularly. That Satish would swing violently from atheism to mysticism is intelligible enough, nor need we wonder at his devotion to the attitudinising Swami Lilananda nor even at the weakness which leads Srivilas, who sees through the attitudes, yet to attach himself to the Swami "and tend the feet of the Master." We have all observed such psychological curiosities for ourselves. But the involved love affair with Damini leaves one less conscious of romance than of strangeness. The strangeness is attractive, but makes an unsatisfactory basis for literary criticism, Let us confess the inability in ourselves, and leave it at that.

5 December, 1925

**THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS**

p11c2(D)

**Section : THE BOOKSELLER'S WINDOW.**

**BROKEN TIES.** By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan; 7s. 6d.)

Professor Rothenstein's portrait of the author (it is not reproduced in this volume of the Macmillan series) is the best introduction to a book by Rabindranath Tagore. Rothenstein has caught him, holds him for Western eyes; and to read one of his stories with full appreciation one needs some such assistance. Here he is not to be pinned down; he is a misty figure; he appears and disappears behind the veil of the East. He writes of his own race with the elisions that a man is apt to use when traits strange to others are simple and familiar to him. The Indian spirit is remote from the perception of the ordinary Englishman. Tagore demonstrates, illustrates, in the sensitive language of the poet; but he does not interpret. If you are humbly content to accept the poise and beauty of his writing, and to follow it as far as you may into a region where you are a blind man among the seers, then you will read the stories in "Broken Ties," and re-read them. In the end you will add them to your library, because in them you have sensed something imperishable. And it is there: they are not, neither do they deal with, ephemeral things. Sacrifice, the futility of material wishes, the difficult way

of self-deception - these are the web of their pattern. But the sacrifices of Hindu men and women are not such as fall to our lot; there is a difference between their worldly desires and ours; and their evasions are so subtle that they often bewilder the European reader. Some of the stories are parables; the others are studies of Tagore's people.

exquisite and somewhat melancholy effect of the whole. The other shorter and slighter tales in the book are a blend of satire and pathos, but all have cleverness, neatness, and charm.

7 December, 1925

**THE ABERDEEN PRESS AND JOURNAL**

p2c6(D)

**TAGORE STORIES.**

**BROKEN TIES AND OTHER STORIES**

By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan.  
7s. 6d.

Readers of this famous Indian author who know only the translations of his poems such as "Gitanjali" or "The Gardener," know only one side, the transcendental, of a very versatile and clever writer. They also miss a teller of fascinating tales, in which the real India and the people of a certain corner of that vast and varied country are portrayed by a master hand. Rabindranath Tagore is a poet, mystic, playwright, and novelist, and he shines in all these facets of his art and thought.

"Broken Ties" occupies three quarters of the present volume, and is the finest of the author's stories we have read, and, in its ending, sombre, almost tragical. The main personalities are four - two Bengali intellectuals, a beautiful widow, Damini, and a Vaishnava, revivalist. The first three form a variation of the eternal triangle, and the revivalist is the planet round which these three unfixed stars revolve. There are glimpses of the inner native life - of atheists confronting and confronted by the orthodox of religious pilgrimages under the train of the revivalist. There are hints of sordidness, portrayal of ecstasy, scenes of love and renunciation.

The story as a whole reminds one of some closely woven Eastern carpet, a little exotic, now light in colour, now dark. One follows the pattern with eagerness, watching the unfolding, the repetition, the fantasy, the twist and turn, until, at the end, one stands back and admires from a distance the

10 December, 1925

**BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE**

p10c5(D)

**Section: BOOKS OF THE WEEK**

**TAGORE STORIES**

**"BROKEN TIES" By Rabindranath Tagore.**  
(Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)

In his treatment of a story Tagore stands by himself. He sees his characters with clear eyes of a poet. He picks a situation which will show forces at work which heighten their gifts whether they be for passion of self-sacrifice or quiet endurance - that is to say, he has the essence of drama in him. And he presents his tale with an economy of circumstance which only the artist can achieve with sufficiency and yet without bareness. In this volume prose-poetry is restrained; atmosphere and background are not over-emphasised as they so often are in Eastern tales. "Broken Ties," the long story, takes us among the diverse followers of a Master along the track of idealism; the shorter tales are simpler, more concentrated. "The Lost Jewels" and "Emancipation" show a sureness and power which Tagore has nowhere revealed more clearly

10 December, 1925

**THE BRITISH WEEKLY**

p270(W)

**RABINDRANATH THE BORE**

**"Broken Ties" and other Stories. By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)**

This book claims an advantage over many by the same author, who has a considerable and faithful

public. It consists of short stories, and thus it can be tasted with less fatigue by a reviewer who finds Mr. Tagore the most tedious of all eminent modern creators of fiction. There is about all his work a woolliness, a lack of definition, either of character, incident or purpose, which classes his novels and short stories, for many people who are not devoid of a taste for literature, among those books, in the polite French phrase, which "will not permit themselves to be read". This is very regrettable, for one finds in this book an admirable clarity and simplicity of style, which make one wish that Mr. Tagore could think of some stories worth telling us. So it must be sufficient to say of "Broken Ties" that it is a fair sample of the work of an author who has many sincere admirers, and that no doubt they will welcome it, as they have done a voluminous product which now includes over twentyfive books.

R.K.R.

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12 December, 1925

**LIVERPOOL POST AND MERCURY**

p4c1(D)

### Wisdom Of The East

#### BROKEN TIES AND OTHER STORIES.

By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.

Tagore's gracious genius leaves us, with every fresh volume, more deeply in his debt. Among the many devout poets and teachers of this generation one voice from the East has spoken most clearly and directly to our hearts. India sits at Tagore's feet, but the Western world has listened to him almost as eagerly, and he, for his part, has learned to express his thoughts and ideals as beautifully in English as in his own tongue.

Tagore's thoughts are drawn from deep wells of truth, feeling, and meditation. The long story, "Broken Ties," in this volume is a tragedy of two noble natures, one Damini, a young girl, in love with the

other, Satish, a devotee. Damini's love is all humility. It casts no shadow of the world upon Satish's holiness. Indeed, she accepts in marriage Satish's friend, the good kind youth who tells her story, knowing that she carries in her breast a mortal pain that will make the marriage a brief one. But Tagore must be suffered to explain his own "wise and innocent" creatures. Only he can make their thoughts and actions easily understandable. The mere statement of these things has no value. Six brief stories, one of which, "Giribala," is, we are told, "translated by the author," fill the last hundred pages - rather less than half - of the present volume. Some brief preface to the English versions of Tagore's works would be welcome. Novels and stories now published without dates or translators' names, often seem to belong to the writer's earliest period when he wrote almost entirely in his own language. All translations by other hands should, I think, be correctly attributed, and the addition of dates to the stories would be equally helpful.

A.M.A.

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18 December, 1925

**SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p3c8(D)

### Mr. Rabindranath Tagore

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore's book becomes obscurer and obscurer, as Alice might have said. The latest "Broken Ties" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), has, to a Western mind at least, little more significance than those that preceded it. Possibly to understand Mr. Tagore thoroughly one needs to have an Oriental mind, and that there are a number of Westerners fortunate to possess this is evident from the success that his books have in England. In "Broken Ties" one is forcibly reminded of "If Winter Comes," the same sentiment, if not the same style. But some of the shorter stories are better. They are all, though chiefly remarkable for an utter absence of point. It may be artistic, but we doubt it, and in any case it is dull.

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1926

2 January, 1926

**THE MIDLAND COUNTIES EXPRESS**

p4c6(W)

**MASTER OF IMAGERY**

**TAGORE TELLS OF FLOWERS  
THE COLOUR OF LOVE**

For wealth of imagery and beauty of simile no modern writer can excel Rabindranath Tagore, whose one act drama, "Red Oleanders" (Messrs. Macmillan and Co. London) introduces us once more into the author's familiar world of mystical philosophy where men and women talk in poetic and delicate diction about the deepest and dearest things of thought and action, of idealism and endeavour.

Red Oleanders are the garland of welcome, the gift of the heart: Nandini feels that they represent the colour of the love of Ranjan, her beloved, a joyous, buoyant lover who carries his holiday-time with him, even in his work. He was loved by Nandini as the rudder in the water might love the sail in the sky, answering its rhythm of wind in the rhythm of waves.

The absence of one was to the other as if the sky had dropped out of life, but when together the bands of stars and planets overhead go dancing from sky to sky like so many minstrel boys. Beauty only responds to beauty; its lute strings break when force tries to force an answer.

One goes away, and a gust of salt air knocks at the heart of the other, and the morning becomes but a swept away remnant of the weary night. The pain of desire for the near belongs to the animal but the sorrow of aspiration for the far belongs to man, where love is absent and figures follow one another in rows, and the sun never arrives at any conclusion. Love appears in procession, one palanquin after another and the riders on horseback look as if they had strips of sunlight pinned on the points of their spears. Finely conceived aphorisms are scattered like gold dust through the pages of "Red Oleanders." Crocodiles' teeth begin by smiling and end by biting says Tagore.

When a captive bird pecks at the bars, does it do so in the spirit of caress? Has the mudday sun any companion?

That which there is none to punish may be a sin, but never a crime. The sunlight climbing through the forest thicket surprises nobody, but the light that breaks through a cracked wall is quite a different thing. I should like to stand you on the top of everything I have smashed throughout my life.

The tiger does not feed on the tiger, it is only man who feeds on his fellow-man

M.W.

7 January, 1926

**THE SCOTSMAN**

p2c4(D)

**Section: CURRENT LITERATURE.**

**BROKEN TIES: AND OTHER STORIES. By  
Rabindranath Tagore. 7s. 6d. net.  
London: MACMILLAN**

About two-thirds of the present volume are taken up the story which gives the title to the collection. As may be expected by admirers of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's work, it is a subtly worked out psychological study couched in simple but telling English. It concerns the spiritual vicissitudes of one, Satish, who starts off under the care of a free-thinking uncle as a spirited and intellectual atheist. But Satish comes under the influence of an exponent of one of those emotional and mystic cults peculiar to the East. He is thereupon transformed - this is a Western way of putting it - from a bright cheery, and open minded young man into a depressing and incomprehensible fanatic. Damini - the woman in the case - is, however a silent and tenacious admirer. But she has to be content in the end with the third party in the story - that is, the supposed narrator - as husband. Satish meanwhile continuing on his search for the unknowable. Then Damini dies; and one begins to wonder what the story has been all about.

8 January, 1926

**THE IRISH TIMES**

p3c6(D)

**Section: RECENT FICTION**

"Broken ties" is a series of rather peculiar and somewhat sensuous stories. Such charm as it possesses for the Western mind depends entirely on its strange quality, and its novelty will induce even the hardened fiction reader to pursue the volume to the end, wondering the while, perhaps, if this type of story is typical, and reflecting that, if it be so, then the chasm between the East and the West widens with every day of what the world is pleased to call "progress".

"Broken Ties and Other Stories" - By Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 7/6 net.

14 January, 1926

**THE CHRISTIAN WORLD**

p4(W)

**TAGORE**

**THE INTERNATIONALIST**

**By Sharon S. Singha**

If one were asked, "What is the difference between Tagore and Gandhi?" the answer would be that one is a Nationalist and the other an Internationalist. Both are great men, and India cannot afford to do without either of them. But Gandhi is absorbed entirely in India's present-day problems, her political emancipation being the predominant factor of all his many-sided activities; while Tagore is not perturbed by politics, but wishes India to contribute her share to the thought of the world. While Gandhi would like to see India a self-governing and respected nation politically, Tagore would like to see his Motherland take her place in the ranks of the cultured peoples of the civilised world.

Indian nationalism is Gandhi's daily bread, while to Tagore Nationalism is the curse of the world and a poison that kills the soul of man. Tagore is

a Nationalist, too, but his Nationalism runs not along lines of franchise of political propaganda, but rather along the lines of a cultural awakening. That India should not be ashamed of her heritage, but proud of it, that she should contribute to the thought of the world in the realms of art, literature, philosophy and music, is the Nationalism of Tagore.

While Gandhi would have us avoid Western civilisation as something essentially evil, Tagore would draw a distinction between the good and bad in the West, and would have us accept the cultural and spiritual thought of the West. He would say to us, with Tennyson,

Let knowledge grow from more to more  
But more of reverence in us dwell.

As an Internationalist, Tagore welcomes to his house the best minds of the West, and gives them an opportunity to meet the best minds of the East. He is anxious that we should share with each other the various manifestations of the Eternal Truth as He reveals Himself to men and women of the various races through their own art, literature and music. For it is the One Universal Word becoming flesh and we must comprehend Him in all His glory and fullness. We must, according to Tagore, realise our fundamental spiritual unity with each other.

It is safe to say that of the two men, Gandhi is better known in India than the poet, though the latter holds a unique place in the mind and thought of the West. It is the English translation of his works that has brought Tagore to the forefront. It was when the West discovered the genius of Tagore that his own country began to pay him honour. His Bengali poems in 1921 had not gone through their first edition, and did not bring royalties over £20 a year, while their English translation, the *Gitanjali*, in one year ran through several editions. In a country where the masses are illiterate, and where even all the educated men and women do not know Bengali, Tagore could not be appreciated. The English language has placed his writings in the hands of the "Intelligentsia," who now bow to Tagore's master mind.

Gandhi, on the other hand, was known by all. He became the man of the people, for he was concerned with their everyday needs. His life was

simple, he travelled in the uncomfortable third-class on the train, carrying his own luggage, sharing the everyday life of the millions. Tagore travelled first, in comfort, dressed beautifully in flowing robes, looking a real old Patriarch, a prince amongst men, surrounded by flowers, for him a thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

Though free from racial antagonism himself, Gandhi, in his Nationalistic zeal, generated a force of narrow nationalism amongst his followers. Tagore, the seer and prophet, saw its inevitable consequences. He lamented these outburst of a Nationalist bigotry in his countrymen, and a cry of anguish went up from his heart. He seemed to be a voice calling in the wilderness. He was called a dreamer and an idealist. This was not the time of season to talk of Internationalism. But when the rage and fury of the day was over, and even Gandhi saw what his followers had done, the reaction set in, and that still small voice which Tagore had raised in his village home at Bolpur began to be heard. Thinking India is now turning for its inspiration to that little place in Bengal, where the cultures of the East and the West are mingling and calling out to a broken world to heal its wounds by realising the Common Fatherhood of God.

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14 January, 1926

# THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

p26(W)

## BROKEN TIES

BROKEN TIES AND OTHER STORIES, by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.), contains seven short stories, the first of which, "Broken Ties," is by far the longest. It is about a young man who was at first an atheist and then a religious fanatic, but finding that he cannot rely upon either his reason or his emotions he searches for some definite support. The author's style is full of imagery, and the whole tenor of the story shows that the actual history of the young man's mental processes is not the chief purpose and interest of the story, but that it is in some way symbolical. And though some of the other stories are

more directly and superficially interesting, they, too, seem to be symbolical. Perhaps the best story in this book is that of "Giribala," which Sir Rabindranath translates.

The myths and fairy stories of all countries are like each other in many ways, and they seem to be symbolical in the same way as dreams are. Like fairy stories, Sir Rabindranath's stories have the universal quality of symbols. The human mind naturally uses symbols as a means of expression, though it is only when it is most sophisticated that it realizes either that it is using symbols or what the symbols represent. We can accept and understand a fairy story or a myth like that of Demeter and Persephone without realizing that these are symbolical. Only, a particular intensity, which we may be aware of without knowing whence it comes, is given to such stories by the fact that they are symbols. As writers become more aware that they are using symbols they tend to make their stories less easily acceptable to one who does not interpret the symbolism. The parable tends to become less and less intelligible as a story and loses the particular intensity of unconscious symbolism, for the beauty of symbols is greater before than often they have been interpreted. Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* is an example of entirely unconscious dream symbolism, while in Mr. T. S. Eliot's "Waste land" the superficial story is nearly meaningless because the writer was entirely aware that he was using symbols. Sir Rabindranath's stories seem to be transitional between conscious and unconscious symbolism. He has the rare gift which some poets and writers of fairy stories have: of unconsciously using symbols while consciously writing aware of his gift, and for this reason he is not like the writers of fairy stories and is, indeed, half-way between Coleridge and Mr. T.S. Eliot. This leads him sometimes to write a story pointless in itself and without the intensity of a parable. In such cases, to make a dull story interesting he seems to have relied on his gift, though as he has no control over it, for it is unconscious, he cannot always make it serve him.

When symbolism is at its best it seems to have endless layers of meaning, just as the psychoanalysts say that dreams have. The tendency nowadays is to regard the bottom layers as the most valuable, partly, no doubt, because they are the

most obscure. But when writers who think this go one to draw the logical conclusion and to leave out the top layers the result is necessarily a failure. For the bottom layers of symbolism are not of value in themselves, but only in so far as they colour the more obvious meaning of the symbols. The universal story of the three sons who go out into the world, of whom the first two are unkind and do not succeed, while the third is kind and so does succeed, seems to owe its fascination to an obscure symbolism of a universal quality of the human mind. But if this universal quality were to be discovered and written down the result would probably not be a work of art. Sir Rabindranath has a tendency to leave out the top layers in some of his stories. But where he has not done this, as he has not done in the best of the stories here, "Giribala," his use of symbols is masterly, and he succeeds in convincing us that this story has a great many successive layers of meaning.

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15 January, 1926

**THE CHURCH TIMES**

p73(W)

**NEW FICTION**

**Broken Ties. By Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)**

These Indian tales by Rabindranath Tagore are interesting in the insight they give us into their racial mentality as well as their national conditions: and, as one would expect from an Indian source, the psychic and meditative revelations are subtle and humorous and deep. "As a general rule in this world, the wife knows the husband far better than the husband ever knows his wife, but extremely modern men in their subtlety of nature are altogether beyond the range of those unsophisticated instincts which womankind has acquired through ages. These men are a new race and become as mysterious as woman themselves. Ordinary men

can be divided, roughly, into three main classes: some of them are barbarians, some are fools, and some are blinds".

"He shook his head and said, 'I don't like the look of things'. The fact is that wise men never like the look of things". "The loving wife is a wife who makes it difficult for her husband to forget her, and the fatigue of perpetual remembrances wears out life's bloom. It is only when a man has lumbago that he becomes conscious of his waist; and lumbago in domestic affairs is to be made conscious, by the constant imposition of love, that you have such a thing as a wife". "If you make holes in a bamboo tube, its power of receptivity is lost, but if you blow through it, it may produce music. I felt sure that the man who is not productive in other fields can at least produce literature".

It is in delightful observations such as quoted that the charm of these stories lies. Also we think that the fiction of other countries is enormously educative in that understanding which is being sought, increasingly successfully, throughout the world. Therefore we welcome with more than a mere passing interest, but as a link between different races, such a book as *Broken Ties*.

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20 January, 1926

**THE SOUTHPORT GUARDIAN**

p7c3(2W)

**Tagore's Political Parable.**

**"RED OLEANDERS", by RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan, 5/-).**

Tagore is a poet and a philosopher, also he is a politician and a playwright. He has a peculiar sense of Oriental humour and a tendency to symbolism that shown him akin to Maeterlinck. An oriental he is also a universalist. He welds all these qualities into the fabric of his new play; with sensitive skill in portraying the eternal emotion of man's rebellion against the restricting forces of tradition, the conventions and the chaos of civilisation, the divine discontent, in the name of personality, character,

temperament against the curbing and chafing chains which systems of politics, government, even religion impose upon the free spirit and the pursuit of beauty, in life; he shows us that to gain power we sacrifice that which makes life enjoyable, that to gain material success we lose "the living heart of the earth which gives itself up to love and life and beauty". The mysterious King, lives behind a lattice; there are governors and assistant governors; there is Nandini, a woman of freedom; Ranjan, her lover or friend, that is not quite clear; Bishu, whom the government have tried to use as a spy, but who is on the side of the diggers; Kishor, a boy-slave, who worships Nandini; a Professor who advises restraint and acquiescence and the workers who dig for gold for the King, and are harshly treated, though comfortably, because they are slaves and have no freedom of opinion. The conflict of the play is between the King and Nandini. Towards the end he offers to help her to break his tyranny, as oppressive to him as to his subjects. It is an unusual alliance:

**King:** Be brave, Nandini trust me Make me your comrade to-day.

**Nandini:** What would you have me do?

**King:** To fight against me, but with your hand in mine That fight has already begun.

There is my flag. First I greet the Flagstaff - thus! Next it's for you to tear its banner. Let your hand unite with mine to kill me, utterly kill me. That will be my emancipation.

**Guards:** What are you doing, King? You dare break the Flagstaff which has its one point piercing the heart of the earth and the other that of heaven? What a terrible sin - on the very day of the Flagworship!

It is a whimsical parable, not fully realised; presented with some fine glimpses of beauty in the style, occasional touches of humour in the herdsman and subsidiary characters, yet never realising its allegorical message or defining its metaphysical or political meaning. The drama never gets clear of the atmosphere.

11 February, 1926

## THE MORNING POST

p8c7(D)

### AN INDIAN SAVANT

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

Calcutta.

Babu Dwijendranath Tagore, who died recently, was always overshadowed by his more famous younger brother, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. Nevertheless, he was recognised as a man of vast learning and an authoritative writer in the Bengali language on philosophy. He was for many years the head of the Tagore family, and used to devote his time and energy in popularising the Hindu Philosophy of "Vedas" and "Upanishads".

He was for many years editor of the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*, and his contribution to Bengali literature will remain to be appreciated by scholars for generations to come. A poet of no mean repute, his book "Sanraphrayn" (sic) is considered a gem in Bengali literature. Some years ago he left the busy life of Calcutta and made Bolpur his permanent home. There he used to spend his days in learned discourse with the savants of different nations who went there in connection with the work of Biswabharati, Dr Tagore's University.

8 April, 1926

## THE METHODIST TIMES

p18(W)

### Rabindranath Tagore

"Broken Ties and Other Stories", by Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan & Co. 7s 6d. net) - In England, Tagore has been long known as a notable Hindu philosopher, reformer and poet, and these stories are relations of all three sides of this complex artist. "Broken Ties" gives its name to the volume; it is the name of a study in four chapters of Hindu woman. She is a widow freed from the cruelty and horror of the caste Hindu widow. "She is another aspect of Universal Woman, she is the artist of the art of life". Her own emotional

development and reactions upon three men are worked out in terms of Mr. Tagore's pessimistic philosophy. The stories are all of a new India and India breaking away from the superstitions and grossness of Hinduism, suspicious of the West, and yet having not yet found any satisfactory answer to the riddle of life. If these are true pictures of new-Hinduism, it is cloudy and obscure. Nothing can destroy the magical touch of the poet as he deals with the mysterious and sometimes eerie beauty of Indian scenes. Mr. Tagore, the poet, speaks a language all can understand.

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21 May, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p18c3(D)

Signor Mussolini has directed that Dr. Rabindranath Tagore shall be the guest of the Italian government during his stay in Rome, where he is expected shortly for the purpose of thanking Signor Mussolini personally for his efforts towards increasing the cultural relations between Italy and India.

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22 May, 1926

**THE SOUTHPORT GUARDIAN**

p11c3(2W)

**The Elusive East.**

**"BROKEN TIES", by RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Macmillan, 7/6)**

Tagore is best expression we have of Indian fiction and poetry, the interpreter to the Western mind of the elusive East, in all its wise gracious innocence, its search for philosophic expression, its moral and even human message. These seven stories, the title along-short, the others slender

and slight yet marked by rare economy, rich suggestion, ironic humour, and fresh suggestive metaphor will charm the faithful; they are lacking in explicitness, it is true, are more concerned with philosophy than with politics (which are however, inferentially treated), or with plot (which is only necessary as a vehicle for Tagore's thoughts and ideas), and require a certain mood in the reader. But they make a strong appeal because they reveal thoughts, sometimes arguments in theology, sometimes humour that is heavy in the oriental fashion, and sometimes fresh and flashing and light, that are drawn sincerely from deep wells of truth, feeling, and meditation. The long story, "Broken Ties", is a tragedy of two noble natures, one Damini, the young girl, in love with the other, Satish, a devotee and ecstatic, at war with his family, alternating between mysticism and atheism. The love-interest is more strange than romantic; it is strong yet peculiarly impersonal and objective; Damini's love is all humility; she accepts in marriage Satish's friend, who tells her story, knowing that she carries in her breast mortal pain that will make the marriage a brief one. "This is my secret wealth, my touchstone. With it, as dower, I was able to come to you. Otherwise I should not have been worthy". Yet she is merely the maternal complement of Satish, the provider of his creature comforts, not his emotional comrade. It is not the story, but the emotional and religious progress of Satish that appeals - his rebellion in ideas, his research for "such simple peacefulness that no one could even guess what he believed or what he did not". Six brief stories, one of which, "Giribala", is, we are told, "translated by the author", fill the last hundred pages - rather less than half - of the volume. Of these the brief "The Editor", and "Emancipation" are each fine examples; they present slender incidents with a full realisation of their idea-content without any waste of words, yet make us realise vividly how the journalist disillusioned of fame and popularity and fiery polemics realised himself in love and service for his sick daughter, and how the emancipated lover refused the freedom purchased for him by the sacrifice of his life of a boy love-sick for proud Shyama "of a perilous charm", who desires him, and then repudiates her love.

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2 June, 1926  
**THE TIMES**  
 p11c7(D)

**Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who is in Rome as the guest of the Italian Government, was received on Monday evening by Signor Mussolini.

3 June, 1926  
**THE YORKSHIRE OBSERVER**  
 p13c3(D)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

**HALIFAX ADDRESS**

Mrs. Schroeder, wife of the Rev. W. L. Schroeder, Leeds, formerly of Halifax, yesterday gave to members of Halifax Ladies' Luncheon Club a talk on the Indian mystic poet, Rabindranath Tagore. She pointed out in the first instance that Tagore had written about 150 books, including novels, poems, political tracts, work on education, political and philosophy. He had also founded a school and a University. He belonged to a gifted family, his father having been an extraordinary person, and the family had produced poets, philosophers and artists.

Anyone racked by daily occurrences and who felt the times were out of joint could restore a proper frame of mind by reading Tagore's poems. His spirit lifted one beyond the ordinary daily turmoil and helped one to put aside the smallnesses that irritated.

The school Tagore had founded was an interesting experiment. As a child he himself was with his brothers left largely in the hands of servants who were not too sympathetic. But he was taken by his father on one of the latter's many pilgrimages. The father believed in making children responsible in giving them a great deal of freedom, and taught children to be fearless.

In the school that Tagore founded those characteristics of his father were expressed. It was largely

in the open air with the beautiful idea of letting the pupils absorb the many lessons that nature herself taught. He determined that pupils should not suffer as much as he had suffered. Freedom was one of the principles of the school, and the pupils were also given a measure of self-government. Athletics had their proper place in the school.

Mrs. Schroeder devoted the remainder of her talk to showing how Tagore's love for children had led him to write lovely poems about children, and she read as examples "The Source", "When and Why", and "On the Sea Shore", poems wherein lovely fantasy is wrapped around child-life.

This assembly marked the close of the session. The average attendance has been close on 200, and there were about 250 members. There is also a large waiting list. The session will recommence, it was announced by Mrs. C. Ramson, who presided, either on October 19 or 20, when Miss Clemence Dane, the dramatist, will be the speaker. That will be an open session. Mrs. Ramsden announced with regret that Miss Phyllis Bently, one of the secretaries, owing to an appointment, had resigned her office.

10 June, 1926  
**THE BIRMINGHAM MAIL**  
 p5c2(D)

**Section: CLUB AND SOCIETY GOSSIP**

**SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE**



(Photo: Elliott & Fry.)

SIR R. TAGORE.

**Fig. 33**  
*The Birmingham Mail*  
 10 June 1926, p5

The Indian poet and philosopher, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, is to visit Europe shortly for the benefit of his health. He intends to place himself in the hands of Swiss doctors, but to escape publicity his destination in Switzerland is not being disclosed. As soon as his health has been established it is expected that he will embark on a lecture tour. It is stated that the earlier part

of his stay in Europe will be spent in Italy on a visit to Signor Mussolini.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore (he was knighted in 1915) has been a prolific writer. He came to England in 1912 and translated some of his Bengali works into English, and in the following year received the Nobel Prize for literature. Born in 1861, the son of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, and educated privately, at the age of 24 he went to take charge of his father's estate, and there wrote many of his works. He has a fresh and sensitive feeling for nature, and a deep sympathy for humanity, which was expressed when he founded his famous school at Santiniketan Bolpur, Bengal, known as the "Home of Peace", which later developed into an international institution called Visva Bharati. This has constituted his life work ever since.

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10 June, 1926

**THE DAILY CHRONICLE**

p5c4(D)

**A Last Look Round**

**News in Brief from all Quarters**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet and philosopher, is to visit Europe shortly for the benefit of his health. He intends to place himself in the hands of Swiss doctors.

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10 June, 1926

**THE LIVERPOOL POST AND MERCURY**

p4c3(D)

**Tagore's Rest Cure**

[Same as the first paragraph of *The Birmingham Mail* published on 10 June, 1926]

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10 June, 1926

**THE NEAR EAST AND INDIA**

p659(V)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who is in Rome as the guest of the Italian Government, was received on Monday evening by Signor Mussolini.

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11 June, 1926

**BRADFORD DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p6c7(D)

**An Indian Poet**

Rabindranath Tagore, who recently visited Mussolini in Rome, is a greater traveller even to countries which offer most contrast to his mode of thought and life. I met him in America some three or four years ago where he was being universally feted with luncheons and other gatherings. His great height as well as his severe distinguished dust-coloured robe and turban would alone have made him stand out among many people gathered together to do him honour. What was curious about him was his voice, which was high and unimportant. From such a big man with so reverent an appearance it came as a great surprise. New York is nothing if not romantic, and mothers of sons brought them to the poet for his blessing. He did not however seem in his element there, and the hustling life and endless stream of people must have been entirely prohibitive of the life of thought and meditation which he likes to lead.

"Town Talker" in the "Westminster Gazette".

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11 June, 1926

**THE DAILY NEWS**

p7c7(D)

**TAGORE IN ITALY  
WHAT THE INDIAN POET  
THINKS OF MUSSOLINI**

**From Our Own Correspondent**

ROME. Thursday

Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian poet, is staying in Italy as the guest of Mussolini. He has changed



RABINDRANATH TAGORE, THE FAMOUS INDIAN POET AND PHILOSOPHER,  
AMONGST THE RUINS OF THE CARACALLA BATHS IN ROME



A FAMOUS INDIAN POET LECTURING IN ROME :  
SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

his opinions regarding Fascism and its leader, though he agrees that no good would result from the extension to other countries of methods which have been found suitable in Italy.

"It is for me to study, not to criticise from outside", he said, when I asked him for his opinions "I am glad of this opportunity to see for myself the work of one who is assuredly a great man, and a movement that will certainly be remembered in history".

Tagore will spend the whole of this month in Italy, and hopes to visit London towards the end of July.

11 June, 1926

### THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

p8c5(D)

#### Section : THE ROUND OF THE DAY

[The same news item published in *Bradford Daily Telegraph* written by "Town Talker" on the same day]

12 June, 1926

### THE LIVERPOOL ECHO

p2c3(D)

#### Section: ECHOES AND GOSSIP OF THE DAY

##### Poet's Secret Rest Cure

[The same report published in *Liverpool Post and Mercury* on 10 June, 1926]

27 June, 1926

### THE OBSERVER

p11c4(S)

#### A MESSAGE FOR EUROPE TALK WITH RABINDRANATH TAGORE THE MALADY OF UNREST EAST AND WEST

(By Aldo Sorani.)

Rabindranath Tagore has paid his second visit to Italy, this time in response to Mussolini's personal

invitation, and Mussolini welcomed him in Rome with all the honours. The poet was much feted not only in Rome, but also at Florence and at Turin, where great crowds came to hear his public lectures on "The meaning of Art" and on his "School", lectures he will repeat in London. In the meantime he proposes to make a sojourn in Switzerland and Austria, and also to consult some specialists about the heart trouble which impairs his health at present.

In Florence I was privileged to have quite a long talk with the poet. We met in the sunny sitting-room of his hotel that dominates the Lung' Arno, and the poet talked with me in a low and sweet but rather tired voice; sunk in a deep arm-chair, caressing in his hands an English translation of the last novel by Selma Lagerlof.

"Italy appears to me ever more beautiful", he said. "and Florence fairest among Italian cities. But I would have referred to come to Italy not laden with years and fame, but in a neophyte's pilgrimage, even as Shelley and Keats came. Youth would have appreciated better still the message Italian poetry conveys. Yet, neither celebrity nor old age are of my making or fault!

#### THE BURDEN OF FAME

Tagore returned to the burden of his world celebrity. "I am not made to run about the world and to be pointed out to the crowd, especially the European crowd. My life and its message are interior; all true life is interior. The multitude gather to behold the Poet, to hear the Poet, yet, having seen and heard him, it does not know him, for the Poet remains concealed, and the louder the clamour and the larger the multitude, the more deeply will the Poet withdraw himself within the shelter of his soul and rest unknowable. But how can I now rid myself of the burden of renown?"

I asked him, pointing in the novel by Selma Lagerlof, if he read many European tutors, and he replied that he read many of the English, like all the pupils of his School, who devour English books with ardour. Nordic literature makes the strongest appeal to him, and especially the Russian; above all, Dostoievski, Tolstoi, Turgheniev, and also Gorki.

### THE INNER DISCORD

Almost inevitably our conversation touched upon the relations between East and West, the two civilisations.

"I always think", said Tagore, "that the two civilisations can and should remain distinct, and, at the same time, complete and harmonise each other. In Asia we are already too much apart and divided into countries, races, and cults of diverse origin. You in Europe, despite many divisions and many struggles, have succeeded, after long efforts, in attaining to a unity of culture, and this unity has an element of the miraculous, especially in the field of the organisation and co-ordination of scientific knowledge, and hence has a supreme importance."

"But does it not seem to you that the world war has interrupted and menaced even this cultural unity?"

"May be, but not for ever. You are to-day more crude, more wilful, more exacting, and, even after the war, more aggressive and at variance. Yet the greater danger for you would lie in the acquired habit of belief in discord as an ineluctable and fatal law of life, and, above all, in believing necessary and beautiful the interior discord, that is to say, the warring of man's soul with itself. There are people to-day who hold that true life lies precisely in the continual contradiction with themselves, this intimate fight of ideas, sentiments, passions. It is a dangerous error. The ideal life consists not in a state of perpetual contradiction with ourselves and with others, for life should achieve harmony within us; it should radiate peace and union.

### RICHES AND FREEDOM

"It is true, however, that the catastrophe of the war suffices to explain this restlessness within and without, which nevertheless cannot endure for ever. The day will come when it will be borne in upon you that the desire for exterior benefits and their accumulations is useless and dangerous, and you will feel the need of a true peace and to put order in your houses and in your souls.

"You will then recognise that much you held as goods as not so in reality, but are the rubbish of

centuries, and then you will set yourselves to sweep away the dross that to-day hampers and oppresses you. Then, indeed, you will possess, both within and without, a new land of promise whereon to build, wherein to sow the seed of coming harvests, and you will reach a higher plane of civilisation and neighbourly life with others and with yourselves".

"Do you share the belief of some others that assistance for this necessary work of clearance and rebuilding could profitably come to us from America?"

"No: America is too far away, too much a prey also to the same ills that agitate Europe, too pre-occupied with this world's goods, and too rich. One could quote to her the words of Christ: 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven'. For America to prove of aid and inspiration to Europe, it would behove her also to have gone through the deep waters of calamity. Moreover, America is not free. We in India are, it is true, under a foreign domination, but we are freer men by far than Americans — spiritually freer".

28 June, 1926

### THE EDINBURGH EVENING DISPATCH

p3c6-7(DE)

### A NEW LAND OF PROMISE

Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, in the course of an interview during his visit to Italy, said:

It is true that the catastrophe of the war suffices to explain the restlessness within and without which nevertheless cannot endure for ever. The day will come when it will be borne in upon you that the desire for exterior benefits and their accumulations is useless and dangerous, and you will feel the need of a true peace and to put order in your houses and in your souls.

"You will then recognise that much you held as goods as not so in reality, but are the rubbish of centuries, and then you will set yourselves to sweep away the dross that to-day hampers and oppresses you. Then, indeed, you will possess, both within

and without, a new land of promise whereon to build, where in to sow the seed of coming harvests, and you will reach a higher plane of civilisation and neighbourly life with others and with yourselves"

"Do you share the belief of some others that assistance for this necessary word of clearance and rebuilding could profitably come to us from America? he was asked.

"No: America is too far away, too much a prey also to the same ills that agitate Europe, too pre-occupied with this world's goods, and too rich. One could quote to her the words of Christ: 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven'

For America to prove of aid and inspiration to Europe, it would behove her also to have gone through the deep waters of calamity. Moreover, America is not free. We in India are, it is true, under a foreign domination, but we are freer men by far than Americans - spiritually freer". - ALDO SORANI in the *Observer*.

—

28 June, 1926

### THE TIMES

p13c7,D

#### Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived at Villeneuve, on the Lake of Geneva, where he intends to make a prolonged stay.

—

30 June, 1926

### THE NEAR EAST AND INDIA

p762,W

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived at Villeneuve, on Lake Geneva, where he intends to make a prolonged stay.

—

3 July, 1926

### THE INQUIRER

p420(W)

DR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, who has lately been in Italy, where Signor Mussolini was an interested hearer at one of his lectures, is now at Villeneuve, on the lake of Geneva, where he intends to stay for some time.

—

18 July, 1926

### THE OBSERVER

p10c5(S)

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN VIENNA

#### THE SPIRITUAL UNION OF EUROPE

(From Our Own Correspondent)

VIENNA, July 14.

Rabindranath Tagore has come to Vienna for a second visit. He is in the company of his son, his friend, Professor Mahalonobis, and the professor's wife. He is still in a very fragile state, but is to speak to-night to the youth of Vienna, where he will also read some of his favourite poems. He is at present working at a volume of poems in the Bengalese language, which, however, will not be translated.

Discussing the Pan European idea, he said the political union of European countries did not seem to him so important as we generally believed. In truth, he said, union had already been achieved. The stranger coming from another part of the globe felt amazed at the unity of the Continent in spirit and culture. Work had to be continued in that direction. Political union seemed to him impossible for some time to come.

A reception by the Federal President, Dr. Hainisch, and by the Education Minister is planned. Tagore will proceed from here to Prague before returning to India.

—

19 July, 1926

**THE GLASGOW EVENING NEWS**

p4c7(D)

**Section: CLYDESIDE ECHOES**

**Crisp Notes from Many Quarters**

Among those reported by an English paper as being considered by Polish boys as among the heroes of the world were Rabindranath and Tagore. There is always some mystery about those Eastern personalities.

29 July, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p5c7(D)

Dr Rabindranath Tagore, writing to a correspondent in this country, says: "For some cause or other a misunderstanding has found currency in the papers to the effect that I admire the idea and methods of Fascism. In my interviews in Italy I was always careful to mention that I was not competent to say anything about Fascism, not having studied the subject. I have realised that in the Italy to-day it is impossible for a traveller to gather the information necessary for an unbiased estimate of this movement. My admiration for the personality of Mussolini which I have had occasion to express was that of an artist. For my moral judgment of him I must have fuller data and evidence".

5 August, 1926

**THE EVENING STANDARD**

p6c3(D)

**Section: A LONDONER'S DIARY**

**Sir Rabindranath Tagore**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore's present visit to London will hardly cause so much excitement as his

visit before the war, when he was a recent winner of the Nobel Prize and the very latest thing in exotic poetry and the interpretation of the profound spirit of the East

**INDIA'S POET HERE.**



Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, is now in London. A picture of him on the terrace of his hotel yesterday.

**Fig. 35 The Daily Graphic**  
5 August, 1926. p1

As a matter of fact, he is a Bengali poet who has been almost entirely moulded by European influences. When he was young his fellow-countrymen could find no better way to praise him than to call him "the Shelley of Bengal" which, as he observes with great commonsense, only made him ridiculous.

More than once he has shown more common sense than his admirers. In the height of his fame in London, at a banquet given in his honour, he was besought to sing one of his "wonderful mystic songs." Whereupon, secure in the knowledge that none of his appreciators understood the language in which he wrote, he turned up his eyes to heaven and sang them one of the ribald drinking-songs of his unregenerate youth.

5 August, 1926

#### THE DAILY SKETCH

p8:D1

#### "FAMOUS INDIAN POET'S VISIT

- Rabindranath Tagore, who received Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, photographed at his Hotel in London."

[The same photograph published in *The Daily Graphic*, 5 August, 1926, p.1]

5 August, 1926

#### THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p9:7 and p10:1-2:D)

#### PHILOSOPHY OF FASCISM

##### A Letter from Tagore

##### REFUSAL OF SUPPORT

(Copyright in America and Canada)

(The following is the text of a letter which Rabindranath Tagore has sent to Mr C. F. Andrews.)

My mind is passing through a conflict. I have my love and gratitude for the people of Italy. I deeply appreciate their feeling of admiration for me, which is so genuine and generous. On the other hand, the Italy revealed in Fascism alienates itself from

the ideal picture of that great country which I should love to cherish in my heart.

You know I had my first introduction to Italy when I was invited to Milan last year. It takes a long time to study the mind of a people, but not long to feel their heart when that heart opens itself. I was in the city only for a very few days, and in that time I realised that the people loved me. Rightly or wrongly, one can claim praise as one's desert, but love is a surprise every time it comes. I was strongly moved by that surprise when I found loving friends and not merely kind hosts in the people of Italy. It grieved me deeply, and I felt almost ashamed when I suddenly fell ill and had to sail back home before I could fulfil my engagements in all the other towns.

Then followed the magnificent gift from Mussolini, an almost complete library of Italian literature, for my institution. It was a great surprise to me. In this greeting I felt the touch of a personality which could express itself in this direct manner in an appropriate action of unstinted magnificence. This helped me to make up my mind to visit Italy once again, in spite of the misgivings created by the reports reaching us in India about the character of the fascist movement.

I had neither the qualifications nor any inclination to dabble in the internal political issues of the European countries. For this reason I wanted to keep my mind neutral when I came to Italy. But we live in a whirlwind of talk to-day, and an individual like myself is compelled to contribute to that universal noise, dragged by the chain of Karma, as we say in our country. I allowed myself to fall a victim to this relentless Karma, with its even lengthening coil of consequence, when I succumbed to the importunity of the interviewers in Italy.

#### The Interviews in Italy

The interview is a dangerous trap in which our unwary opinions are not only captured but mutilated. Words that come out of a moment's mood are meant to be forgotten; but when they are snapshotted, most often our thoughts are presented in a grotesque posture which is chance's irony. The camera in this case being also a living mind, the picture becomes a composite one in which two dissimilar features of mentality have made a misal-

*lance* that is likely to be unhappy and undignified. My interviews in Italy were the products of three personalities - the reporter's, the interpreter's, and my own. Over and above that, there evidently was a hum in the atmosphere of another insistent and universal whisper, which, without our knowing it, mingled in all our talks. Being ignorant of Italian I had no means of checking the result of this concoction. The only precaution which I could take was to repeat emphatically to all my listeners that I had as yet no opportunity to study the history and character of Fascism.

Since then I have had the opportunity of learning the contents of some of these interviews from the newspaper cuttings that my friends have gathered and translated for me. And I was not surprised to find in them what was, perhaps, inevitable. Through misunderstanding, wrong emphasis, natural defects in the medium of communication, and the pre-occupation of the national mind, some of these writings have been made to convey that I have given my deliberate opinion on Fascism, expressing my unqualified admiration.

This time it was not directly the people of Italy whose hospitality I enjoyed, but that of Mussolini himself as the head of the Government. This was, no doubt, an act of kindness, but somewhat unfortunate for me. For always and everywhere official vehicles, though comfortable, move only along a chalked path of programme too restricted to lead to any places of significance, or persons of daring individuality, providing the visitors with specially selected morsel of experience.

The only opinions I could gather in such an atmosphere of distraction were enthusiastically unanimous in praise of Mussolini for having rescued Italy in a most critical moment of her history, from the brink of ruin.

### **"Absurd to Imagine that I could Support it"**

In Rome I came to know a professor, a genuinely spiritual character, a seeker of peace who was strongly convinced not only of the necessity but of the philosophy of Fascism. About the necessity I am not competent to discuss, but about the philosophy I am doubtful. For it costs very little to fashion a suitable philosophy in order to mitigate the rudeness of facts that secretly hurt one's conscience.

One statement which particularly surprised me, coming from the mouths of fervent patriots, was that the Italian people owing to their unreasoning impulsive nature, had proved their incapacity to govern themselves, and that, therefore, in the inevitable logic of things, they lent themselves to government from outside by strong hands.

However, these are facts that immediately and exclusively concern Italy herself, though their validity has sometimes been challenged by European critics. But whatever may be the case as to that, the methods and the principles of Fascism concern all humanity, and it is absurd to imagine that I could ever support a movement which ruthlessly suppresses freedom of expression, enforces observances that are against individual conscience, and walks through a bloodstained path of violence and stealthy crime. I have said over and over again that the aggressive spirit of Nationalism and Imperialism, religiously cultivated by most of the nations of the West, is a menace to the whole world. The demoralisation which it produces in European politics is sure to have disastrous effects, especially upon the peoples of the East who are helpless to resist the Western methods of exploitation. It would be most foolish, if it were not almost criminal, for me to express my admiration for a political ideal which openly declares its loyalty to brute force as the motive power of civilisation (That barbarism is not altogether incompatible with material prosperity may be taken for granted but the cost is terribly great; indeed it is fatal) The worship of unscrupulous force as the vehicle of nationalism keeps ignited the fire of international jealousy, and makes for universal incendiarism, for a fearful orgy of devastation. The mischief of the infection of this moral aberration is great because to-day the races of humanity have come close together, and any process of destruction act going does its work on an enormously vast scale. Knowing all this, could it be believed that I should have played my fiddle while an unholy fire was being fed with human sacrifice?

### **Fascism an American Infection?**

I was greatly amused when reading a Fascist organ to find a writer vehemently decrying the pantheistic philosophy of the passive and the meditative East,

and contrasting it with the vigorous self-assertion and fury of efficiency which he acknowledges to have been borrowed by his people from their modern schoolmasters in America. This has suggested to my mind the possibility of the idea of Fascism being actually an infection from across the Atlantic.

The unconscious irony in the article I refer to lies in the fact of the writer's using with unction the name of Christianity in this context - a religion which had its origin in the East. He evidently does not realise that if Christ had been born again in this world he would have been forcibly turned back from New York had he come there from abroad - if for no other reason, then certainly for the want of the necessary amount of dollars to be shown to the gatekeeper. Or if he had been born in that country, the Ku Klux Klan would have beaten him to death or lynched him. For did he not give utterance to that political blasphemy, "Blessed are the meek", thus insulting the Nordic right to rule the world, and to that economic heresy, "Blessed are the poor?" Would he not have been put in prison for twenty or more years for saying that it was as easy for the prosperous to reach the Kingdom of heaven as for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle?

### **Christianity and European Political Thought**

The Fascist professor deals a penthrust against what he calls our pantheism; but that is a word that has no synonym in our language, nor has the doctrine any place in our philosophy. He does not seem to have realised that the idea of Christian theology, that God remains essentially what he is while manifesting himself in the Son's being, belongs to the same principle as our principle of immanence. According to this doctrine the divinity of God accepts humanity for its purpose of self-revelation and thus bridges the infinite gulf between the two. This idea has glorified all human beings, and has had the effect in the Christian West of emancipating individuals from the thralldom of absolute power. It has trained that attitude of mind which is the origin of the best internal politics of the Western peoples. It has helped to distribute the power of government all over the country, and thus has given it a permanent foundation which cannot be tampered with or destroyed by the will of one individual or the

shim of a group. This consciousness of the dignity of the individual has encouraged in the West the freedom of conscience and thought. We in the East come to Europe for this inspiration. We are also dreaming of the time when the individuals belonging to the people of India will have courage to think for themselves and express their thoughts, feel their strength, know their rights, and take charge of their own government

### **Aggrandisement of the Slave State: A Lesson from India**

The Fascist writer I have quoted is evidently fascinated by the prospect of the economic self-aggrandisement of the nation at the cost of the moral self-respect of the people. But it is the killing of the goose for the sake of golden eggs. In the olden civilisations the slavery of the people did build up for the time being powers of stupendous splendour. But this spirit of slavishness constantly weakened the foundations till the towers came down into the dust, offering as their contribution to humanity ruins haunted by venerable ghosts.

In bygone days in India the State was only a part of the people. The mass of the population had its own self-government in the village community. Dynasties changed, but the people always possessed the power to manage all that was vital to them. This saved them from sinking into barbarism, this has given our country a continuity through centuries of political vicissitudes.

Our Western rulers have destroyed this fundamental structure of our civilisation, the civilisation based upon the obligations or intimate human relationship. And therefore nothing to-day has been left for the people through which they can express their collective mind, their creative will, or realise the dignity of their soul, except the political instrument, the foreign model of which is always present before their envious gaze. We come to Europe for our lesson in the mastery of this instrument, as Japan has done and has been successful in her purpose. But must our friend the Fascist philosopher come to us to copy our political impotence, the result of the surrender of freedom for centuries to the authority of some exclusive reservoir of concentrated power, while rejecting our great ideal of spiritual freedom, which has its basis in the phi-

osophy that infinite truth is everywhere, that it is for everyone to reach it by removing the obstruction of the self that obscures light!

### **Impression of Mussolini**

I am sure you will be interested to know what was the impression that I have carried away from my interview with Mussolini. We met only twice, and our meetings were extremely brief, owing very likely to our difficulty of communication through the slow and interrupted medium of an interpreter.

In a hall of which the great size is accentuated by an unusual bareness of furniture, Mussolini has his seat in a distant corner. I believe this gives him the time and space to observe visitors who approach him, and makes him ready to deal with them. I was not sure of his identity while he was walking towards me to receive me, for he was not tall in proportion to his fame that towers high. But when he came near me I was startled by the massive strength of his head. The lower part of the face, the lips, the smile, revealed a singular contradiction to the upper part, and I have often wondered since then if there was not a secret hesitation in his nature, a timid doubt which was human. Such an admixture of vacillation in a masterful personality makes his power of determination all the more vigilant and strong because of the internecine fight in its own character. But this is a mere surmise.

For an artist it is a great chance to be able to meet a man of personality who walks solitary among those who are mere fragments of a crowd which is always on the move, pressed from behind. He is fully visible in his integrity above the lower horizon obstructed by the dense human undergrowth. Such men are the masters of history, and one cannot but feel anxious lest they miss their eternity by using all their force in taking the present by the throat, leaving it dead for all time. Men have not altogether been rare who furiously created their world by trampling human materials into the shape of their megalomaniac dreams, to burden history at last with the bleached bones of their short-lived glory; while there were others, the serene souls, who with the light of truth and magic of love have made deserts fruitful along endless stretches of grateful years.

### **Suspended Appraisal**

But to be honest, I must confess that I cannot fully trust my own impression, caught from a momentary glimpse of Mussolini in which mingled the emphasis of the surroundings in which I was placed. There have been times when history has played tricks with man and through a combination of accidents has magnified the features of essentially small persons into a parody of greatness. Such a distortion of truth often finds its chance not because these men have extraordinary weakness of those whom they lead. This produced a mirage that falsifies the real and startles our imagination into a feeling of awe and exaggerated expectation.

To be tortured by tyranny is tolerable; but to be deluded into the worship of a wrong ideal is humiliating for the whole age which has blundered into submission to it. If Italy has made even a temporary gain through ruthless politics she may be excused for such an obsession, but for us, if we believe an idealism, there can be no such excuse.

And therefore it would be wise for us to wait before we bring our homage to a person who has suddenly been forced upon our attention by a catastrophe, till through the process of time all the veils are removed that are woven round him by the vivid sensations of the moment.

My letter has run to a great length. But I hope you will bear with it, knowing that it has helped me in making my thoughts clear about my experience in Italy and also in explaining the situation in which I have been placed. This letter which I write to you I shall make use of in removing the misunderstanding that has unfortunately been created in the minds of those who are in harmony with my ideals about the problems of the present age.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

*Vienna, July 20*

5 August, 1926

**THE STAR**

p3c5(D)

### FOR NATIONALISM

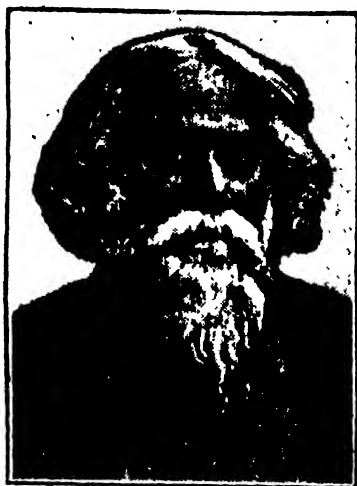
#### Tagore and "Blind Passion" for Fascism

"When I found that Fascism had for its object that cult of blind passion for nationalism and imperialism, I could not have any sympathy for it, though I have very deep love for the people," said Rabindranath Tagore, who related the story of his visit to Italy to a "Daily News" representative.

"The Italian interviewers", he said, "distorted my views, and I came to know that there was an impression about that I had an implicit admiration for Fascism. So I was compelled to correct this with great reluctance.

"Even if it could be conceived that Italy is now in a prosperous condition, yet if it is ethically wrong, and a menace to the rest of the world, then we have the right to judge it, and that is what I feel is expressed in the serious crime of the repression of free speech, and the imperialistic ambition of the Government which goes against the condition of peace in the world".

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE,**



The Indian poet, has arrived in London for a short visit.

**Fig. 36 The Westminster Gazette**  
5 August 1926, p 7

### FAMOUS INDIAN POET.



An exclusive photograph of Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian poet, who is now in London, and who has many admirers in this country.

**Fig. 37 The Birmingham Gazette**  
6 August 1926, p 10

6 August, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p10(D)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN LONDON

*Rabindranath Tagore, photographed in London yesterday  
An interview with him appears in another column*

[contd: p10c1]

#### His Italian Visit: AN OFFICIAL TOUR "None who Dared to Speak" Against Fascism (From our London Staff) FLEET STREET, THURSDAY

No one who has been brought into contact with the gracious and beautiful personality of Rabindranath Tagore, or who has entered into the spirit of his teaching, would easily believe the reports - which he has now disposed of - that he returned from Italy an

admirer of Fascism. He is just now in London on his way to Germany, where his writings are very widely read. When I met him yesterday his mind was still full of the subject of his letter to Mr. C. F. Andrews. Seated in the corner of a couch, the poet, whose fine head over the flowing brown garments fulfils one's ideal of what the head of a poet should be, talked in his gentle and reasonable way of his visit to Italy. He spoke of his anxiety to keep the students in his university in touch with the thought of the West. "The present moment in India", he said, "is not favourable for this propaganda of mine.

They want to repudiate everything Western, but I find feeling is changing. I hope that our movement will be more acknowledged in India before long". Tagore went on to speak of the valuable gift of Italian books which Mussolini made to his university recently. He was very grateful for it, for many of his students are studying Italian literature under that great teacher Professor Tucci. He wants his students to be in touch with all European literature. Valuable gifts of books have been made also by the French Government and from Germany, where a fund was raised to celebrate his birthday in this way

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN LONDON.



Rabindranath Tagore, photographed in London yesterday.

An interview with him appears in another column.

Tagore went on to say that when he went to Italy this year his desire was to remain neutral, and to form his own conclusions. "In our country", he said, "we have lost faith in the incriminating reports which have come to us about European countries

All the Governments have their propaganda of misrepresentation. My Italian friends assured me that Fascism had saved Italy from ruin and that things are not so bad as they have been described. While I wanted to remain neutral I could see that it was difficult. Freedom of expression is repressed in Italy. I never met a single individual in Italy who dared to speak a word against Fascism. My tour was officially arranged, and I was only taken to places where it was thought it would be safe. Even if I had had freedom I do not think I would have met many individuals who would have been courageous enough to speak against Fascism. They were all unanimous in praise of Fascism and Mussolini and his doings, and was quite sure that Mussolini was the one man who could have saved Italy from utter bankruptcy and disorganisation".

#### **The "Temperament" for Self Government**

Discussing the state of politics in Italy Tagore remarked that people could not get a certain form of government by desiring it, but only if they had the temperament to sustain it. Few European countries now have the same sort of political freedom that England enjoys, and that suggested to him that while in the abstract a democratic or republican form of government might be desirable, it would not be attained unless people had what he called the "temperament" for self-government. Failing this, people were sure to find themselves under the government of a strong hand. He thought it strange that so many Englishmen should have been enthusiastic about Fascism, but such was the fact. When he reached Switzerland from Italy he learnt the true facts of the situation. His friends there were surprised at the reports that he was in favour of Fascism. They asked him for explanations, and he found that his words had been misrepresented and exaggerated. Those who had suffered from the hands of the Fascists came to him, and he gradually learnt the truth about the atrocities that had been committed. "I realised then that it

is not enough that Italy should be prosperous. You can make a country prosperous, but if your methods are wrong that is the concern of humanity, and they must be judged according to the ethical standard".

Tagore went on to say that he was greatly struck in Italy by the extent to which translations of his books were published and read. Indeed, he had probably a greater vogue in Italy than anywhere, except perhaps Germany or Scandinavia. An association had been started in Italy to help his educational work in India. "I wish", he said, "that I could have remained neutral with regard to Italian politics, and if I had not been misrepresented in the papers I should have been able to do so. I want to keep open a channel of communication between Indian and the European countries".

#### **A Shaw Story**

He touched for a moment on the general strike in England, and said he had come to feel that the English were the only people who had the particular kind of political wisdom needed to deal with such an emergency. He spoke of our patience and tolerance and law-abiding discipline, the result of centuries of experience in political freedom, and he returned to the idea that self-government is a thing that can be given to no people unless they have the temperament necessary to maintain it steadily over long spaces of time.

In the course of the conversation Mr. Shaw's name cropped up apropos of his seventieth birthday celebrations. Tagore said he had a very great admiration for him, not only for his great powers but for his humanity. He recalled a story which Mr. Shaw himself told him, to the effect that during the suffragist troubles someone came to him and presented a forged letter from a well-known suffragist who was in prison, asking for a loan of £50. Shaw gave the money at once, and when the forgery was discovered someone asked him whether he was not going to try to find the culprit. "Certainly not", said Shaw: "he has paid me the very best compliment possible. He knew it was only Shaw who would have the magnanimity to be so easily duped".

6 August, 1926

**SOUTH WALES NEWS**

p6(D)

[The same photograph of Tagore published in *The Birmingham Gazette* 6 August, 1926.]

6 August, 1926

**WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**

p8c3(DE)

**Section: THE ROUND OF THE DAY**

**TAGORE IN A TAXI**

I caught a glimpse of Sir Rabindranath Tagore this afternoon leaving his hotel. He is certainly a magnificent figure of a man, tall, upright, and with one of the most beautiful heads I have ever seen. His white hair and beard make his dark eyes appear extraordinarily black and mystic. He walked like a priest who might have been saying a mass and his strange woollen coat, for all the world like a dressing-gown, enhanced his remarkable appearance. I wonder what the taxi driver thought of his fare!

Tagore was going to Epstein's studio. He is a great admirer of this sculptor, and was to sit to him all the afternoon. The poet has just come from Italy, and is very tired with his travels, for 65 is older for an Indian than one would suppose.

7 August, 1926

**THE DAILY EXPRESS**

p6c5(D)

**Section: BY THE WAY**

**A Spot of Verse**

Mr. Epstein, for whom Tagore is sitting at present, says that the Indian poet is very still, patient, and majestic. Patience and stillness are in most of his verse. Not many of my readers, I fancy, know this

*morceau* from "*Srenhedingali*" or Cheese-Offering. Listen:

What is life, my brother, but a temple offering?  
I walk through showers of dreams in the evening  
Like a fly in the dust  
Weep not, my daughter.  
In the morning a fire will be lit  
O thou blood-red trumpet, whose feet are weary  
Empty my heart, O brother, on the road,  
As the gardeners empties his *gunam*  
When Gauges flows upwards,  
In palsied pain, O jemadar  
There is no cure for death but life,  
No life for death but life  
No death for life but death  
Go, then, and ask thy master for a blue-bag.

There is a rumour that all this will be reproduced symbolically in elephant-coloured copper by the famous sculptor. I should be the last to deny such a rumour.

**BEACHCOMBER**

7 August, 1926

**THE DAILY NEWS**

p4c3-5 D)

**AN INDIAN WHO  
CONQUERED EUROPE**

**The Amazing Vogue of  
Rabindranath Tagore**

**By S. K. RATCLIFFE**

THE reappearance of Tagore in London is always an event. How should it not be? He is an extraordinary person, and as a phenomenon (there is no other word) he stands entirely alone in our modern world.

Think of it for a moment. Bernard Shaw, making that provocative speech on his 70th birthday, said that he could not feel like a great man; and he added that we had made an end of the Great Man as the nineteenth century knew him. That, broadly speaking, is true. Our gifted contemporaries are, for the most part, looked upon by us all as comrades who, for one reason or another, have gained some importance. We should not dream of reverting them.

I have just come from the funeral of one such Israel Zangwill. He was a man of astonishing endowments. His fame was world-wide. Very few English people have any notion of the importance to mankind of his career. Jewry acknowledged him as a master. Our English public certainly did not. Since Gladstone and Tennyson, it would seem we have agreed to abandon the cult. But the wider world is too much for us. It continues to choose, and enthrone, the great man. And – let us make no mistake about it – it has enthroned Tagore.

It will not do for anyone to argue that the fame of Tagore was made by the Nobel Prize for literature. The Nobel trustees can make a reputation: they cannot make renown: and Rabindranath Tagore is renowned. Of course the award of 1913 was a staggering incident. Tagore at that time was known to the West by a single thin volume of meditative lyrics, done by himself from Bengali verse into the simplest of rhythmic English prose – the all-popular “Gitanjali”.

To-day what is he? One of the half-dozen writers to whom has come a fame transcending all barriers. This poet from India has a greater multitude of readers than any man now writing on the Continent of Europe. Compared with him, the most celebrated of English writers enjoy an almost parochial repute.

### HIS FIRST APPEARANCE

I recall his first apparition among us in 1912. His coming, I think, was due almost entirely to Mr. Will Rothenstein, and it was Mr. W. B. Yeats who, on a memorable summer evening, made known the first of the translated lyrics to an English literary gathering.

A few days before that meeting I had asked him why he had allowed his 50th year to go by without having made any effort to reach the English-reading world. His answer, given with manifest sincerity, was very curious in so remote from English

that transition is impossible; and besides, he added, his own English was so feeble that he could not venture upon versions of his own. At the moment the English “Gitanjali” was in his wallet. With it he was to conquer the globe.

For 20 years I have watched the renown of Rabindranath Tagore spring and spread. In Calcutta, when I first met him, he was a man in the early forties, known already over half India by his songs and plays. Rabindranath’s fertility, in half a dozen provinces of verse and prose, was amazing. He was, however, a vernacular writer, and that alone, Europe in 1912 opened Europe to him. But we can now see that but for the crash of the old European system, with the ensuing agonies, Tagore could never have become a poet of the Western peoples.

In his surprising elderhood he has become a persistent traveller. Several times he has crossed America. He has been through the Far East. His European tours are the kind of triumphal progress such

as is accorded hardly once in a generation to any man of letters. Five years ago I found that a ruined and bitterly disillusioned Germany had taken to him with singular intensity. The vogue of Tagore was indescribable, and his rhythms went perfectly into the German tongue.

A similar destiny is his in Italy at this moment. You may say, and I think you would be right, that Tagore’s quietism and mysticism furnish something that makes an irresistible appeal to a people living under the most effective Iron hand of the age. Anyhow, the fact is there. In Italy to-day, as in Central Europe on the morrow of the war, Tagore is in almost the first flight of popular authors.

The portraits of Tagore – necessarily giving prominence to the bardic locks, the prophet’s robe – do less than justice to the fine head, with the eyes of genius and the look of a man whose spirit has found its fulfilment.



*A facsimile of Tagore's signature in Bengali characters.*

**Fig. 39 Rabindranath Tagore**  
*The Daily News*, 7 August, 1926, p4

As you talk to him, you find that he takes a candid pleasure in the discovery that in every country to which he goes his books have preceded him. He will talk of his school and college in Bengal, the up building of which, with its noble scheme of inter-change between the scholars of East and West, has been the absorbing concern of his later life. He will talk of the awakening of his own people, with the excitements and frustrations of Indian nationalism, since the stage of early excitement when he himself, coming out of his garden and study, tried to take his place on nationalist platforms.

### **GANDHI'S BARREN CREED**

He will talk of Gandhi and his unexampled crusade, from which the Mahatma has withdrawn into his retreat. Of the greatness of Gandhi's spirit the poet will speak without reserve. But Non-Co-operation is for him a barren creed. The Indian people cannot be shut within the prison of their ancient system. Knowledge, the poet of modern India would say, is universal. All experience is interchangeable. East and West are inevitably linked.

7 August, 1926

### **GLASGOW DAILY RECORD**

p7c3(D)

#### **Section: THIS MORNING'S GOSSIP.**

#### **Tagore and Epstein**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, does not like London, which he calls a "stifling cave", but he is visiting all his old friends before going on to Cornwall. Already, I hear, he has agreed to sit for Epstein, and has interested Miss Sybil Thorndike in a new play he has written about a dancing girl. Miss Thorndike is quite eager to produce it.

7 August, 1926

### **THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p8c1-2(D)

#### **Dr. Tagore on Fascism**

The visits of Dr TAGORE to Europe and America are event in history, for there is no mind which sees in so deep and steady a light those aspects of our civilisation that seem strange to Eastern culture. The comments of a European on Eastern ideas or those of an Indian on Western ideas are apt to reveal little more than immediate reaction of a man trained in one kind of school to his first experience of a different system of life. A very able man may govern Eastern peoples for years without learning any essential or fundamental truth about them. A quick, observant eastern may spend years in the West without understanding the play of intellectual forces among the peoples he studies or the character of their habits. For the truth is that few people understand their own culture. They are so used to a way of life and a habit of thought that they do not stop to reflect on it with superficial impressions of their own world. The reason why Dr TAGORE'S opinions of Western institutions have a special depth and power is not that his knowledge of the politician but the knowledge of the philosopher. Whether he looks to the East or to the West he brings to bear on man's conduct and man's ambitions the same illuminating wisdom, the same fidelity to truth, the same passion for beauty, and the same noble love of learning "for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate". He is not so much a prophet bringing wisdom from East and to West as a prophet teaching all mankind truths that in one form or other all nations have to learn.

Those who have read his book on "Nationalism," or the series of letters he wrote during his visit to the West six years ago will not be surprised to learn that an impression which had arisen that he admired the philosophy of Fascism has caused him considerable pain. It would be as easy to imagine TOLSTOY liking such ideas as the poet whose passionate teaching has been a warning against "the fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship". One has only to open his

book on Nationalism at any page to see what he thinks of that philosophy. For what he dreaded in the development of Europe was the development of the power of the State, a development which he saw the loss of great human qualities, the worship of false ideas, and the sacrifice of what was good in man to what is bad. "Obviously," he wrote, "God made man to be human; but this modern product has such marvellous square-cut finish, savouring of gigantic manufacture, that the Creator will find it difficult to recognise it as a thing of spirit and a creature made in His own divine image". This is the fear that haunts his book: the destruction of the natural man "crying for simplicity and beauty" in the ugly complexities of the modern world of war and commerce. "Man in his fullness is not powerful but perfect. Therefore to turn him into mere power you have to curtail his soul as much as possible". The war seemed to him the terrible outcome of his development, a development that began when the great nations emerged from the Europe of the Middle Ages. In this new world knowledge, skill, and the discoveries of men of science and explorers were all bent on the single purpose of organising societies based on power, seeking power, worshipping power, and at last destroying civilisation in the struggle for power. As he surveyed the ruin of Europe he saw the climax of the long and fatal conflict which began the feudal societies and the city States of the Middle Ages made way for the great national States which fought for the great overseas prizes East and West.

Now Fascism is the philosophy carried to an extreme. Man is to be still less; the institution still more. Where Dr. TAGORE sees too much aggrandisement of the political State the Fascist sees too little. What is wrong with the modern world, according to MUSSOLINI, is that there is too little discipline. Men do not obey, they do not produce, they care about the wrong things, they are not ready to sacrifice their comfort, their liberty, their ideas of duty and right and wrong, to the interest and glory of their State. The only way to give strength, direction, and character to a people is to take away its freedom and commit all power to a resolute Government which knows how to give orders. In this spirit he creates a new

State in which the ideas of DIOCLETIN, of MACHIAVELLI, and of BISMARCK all find expression. And its history illustrates already the warnings Dr. TAGORE gave at the end of the war: "When it (society) allows itself to be turned into a perfect organisation of power, then there are few crimes which it is unable to perpetrate. Because success is the object and justification of a machine, while goodness only is the end and purpose of man". Dr. TAGORE compared such a civilisation to a millionaire acquiring wealth at the cost of his soul, and he argued that you cannot go on violating moral laws in the name of your nation and yet enjoy their advantage as individuals. The Fascist State, like the Bolshevik State, is an attempt to put a society under a stiff police system, exhibiting to the world the spectacle of a great State organised for one end, with ruthless disregard of individual freedom. There are patriotic Italians who think all the world will learn lessons from this effort in the creation of power. Dr. TAGORE, reflecting on the rich history of Europe's culture and the brilliant triumphs of her learning, her literature, and her arts, thinks that Italy's supreme gifts to mankind have been the gifts of the spirit. And for that reason, if we read his reflections right, he does not foresee a long life for this experiment or a history which will serve Europe for an example.

7 August, 1926

**THE NATION AND THE ATHENAEUM**  
p525(W)

### Section I: LIFE AND POLITICS

No one who has understood anything of Tagore's teaching would need to be assured that "The Poet" has been libelled by the interviewers. It is, on the face of it, incredible that he should have been perverted into an admirer of Fascism by the hospitality of Mussolini. The spirit of Tagore and the spirit of Italian Imperialism are mutually exclusive. Mussolini has indeed showed remarkable favour to the Indian mystic. His Government recently presented to Tagore's university a wonder-

ful collection of Italian books, takes his share in carrying on Tagore's aim of interpreting the best of Western thought to the East. Tagore's interest in Italy was stimulated by these things, and still more by his discovery during his visit last year that his books are very widely read in Italy. His Bengali translates easily into Italian. When he went to Italy this year he was received by Mussolini with almost royal honours, which might have turned the head of anyone not dowered with the penetration of a mystic. Tagore has no opportunity of getting behind the official "chalk line" to learn the truth about Fascist Italy. He is taking steps to clear away the absurd misconception which has been so useful to the Italian rulers, and his only fear is that his explanation may lead to interruption of the fruitful Italian teaching at his University. The vogue of Tagore in Italy is interesting. May it not be that Italians find in the spiritual freedom of his writings an imaginative release from the political tyranny under which they live?

KAPPA.

8 August, 1926

**THE OBSERVER**

p13c5(S)

**FILMS IN INDIA****DR. TAGORE'S VIEWS  
"A LIBEL ON WESTERN CIVILIZATION"**

The over sensationalism of the modern film was strongly deprecated by Rabindranath Tagore in an interview which he gave to Mr. J. Aubrey Rees, of the British Empire Film Institute.

He deplored the prevalence of films representing sex relationships, gushing sentimentality, night clubs, crime or ludicrous adventures, which, he said, were having a most mischievous effect upon the Indian population. It was seldom realised that the average Indian possessed a deep artistic consciousness, and they would always respond to any film of an elevating character of spiritual background.

The films at present shown could only be regarded in most cases as a libel upon Western civil-

ization. Many of the film which were presumed to represent Indian Orientals constantly misrepresented the life and manners of the East.

He warmly commended "The Light of Asia" film, which in its beauty and dignity counteracted such misrepresentations, and he hoped the work initiated by the Indian players in such a film would be followed up by other films representing oriental ideals in their proper aspects. The value from the moral educative standpoint of such a film was incalculable.

He had great faith in the people, and he believed that a levelling up of the tone of films generally shown was not only very desirable, but would be welcomed by the majority of film audiences.

Rabindranath Tagore welcomed the formation of the British Empire Film Institute, and was so impressed with the value of its work that he considered to join its Grand Council.

Every movement, he said, that aimed at encouraging the emergence of higher standards of art in this industry deserved every support

9 August, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p6c5(D)

**Section: OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT****Dr. Tagore's Plans**

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has now left London and has gone on a visit to Devonshire and thence to Cornwall, where he will be the guest of a well-known citizen of Europe, prominent in the world of international science and social betterment. On leaving England the poet is to make a tour of the Scandinavian countries, thus extending the scope of the European journeys which, since his famous visit to Central Europe after the war, we have had a regular place in his scheme of life.

I hear that Dr. Tagore has been sitting to Mr. Epstein for a head, which is now almost completed. The poet has been much impressed by Mr. Epstein's bust of Joseph Conrad, and seeing it arranged to give sittings to the sculptor.



**EPSTEIN AND TAGORE.**—The much-discussed sculptor (left) is to do a bust of Rabinadrath Tagore (right), the great Hindoo poet and mystic, who is now visiting London.

**Fig. 40** *The Liverpool Daily Courier*, 9 August, 1926, p9

10 August, 1926

**HULL EVENING NEWS**

p6c5(DE)

11 August, 1926

**THE EDINBURGH EVENING DISPATCH**

p4c1-2(D)

**\*Section: NEWS NOTES**

### **"THE PICTURES"**

[Photograph of Epstein and Tagore, A similar but slightly reduced version published in the Liverpool Daily Courier.]

That what is one man's food may be another man's poison is particularly applicable to films which are

turned out of American Screen factories, to be distributed to the four corners of the globe without any thought being given to whether they are suitable for general consumption or not.

In this country we are familiar with American producer's sometimes crude ideas of British Society, and we are no more convinced that the artificialities of American as sometimes portrayed on the screen are any more faithful to the general body of the people.

If we remain unimpressed, the same cannot be said of other peoples, and where considerable mischief is being done is that these films are flooding India and other Eastern countries. To these people, an enormous proportion of whom are illiterate, Western civilisation as pictured in the eternal sex triangle drama with its sloppy sentimentalism, is a thing of contempt. Such impressions are not easily removed in a land where the only glimpse of the outside world is afforded by the screen.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, the eminent Indian, who is on a visit to this country at the present time, is much concerned with the effect of such films which he terms "a libel upon Western civilisation", and coincident with his protest, the Board of Film Censors for Bengal is taking steps to eliminate objectionable features of American films and the lurid posters which are their almost invariable accompaniment.

13 August, 1926

### THE DAILY EXPRESS

p4c5(D)

#### Section: THE TALK OF LONDON

#### VIOLATED HINDU LAW

The visit of Sir Rabindranath Tagore to this country reveals an interesting fact. Up to 1842 it was considered sinful for a Hindu to leave India for the sake of a sojourn among non-Hindus.

In that year, however, a Hindu of Brahmin caste deliberately violated that convention and came to England. He was Dwarkanath Tagore, grandfather of Sir Rabindranath and he stayed here so long that eventually he was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery.

14 August, 1926

### THE INQUIRER

p505(W)

#### A World Influence

RABINDRANATH TAGORE has become a powerful and uplifting influence in the world by reason of his great gifts and noble personality. He holds a position somewhat akin to that of Tolstoy in former years, whose stressful nature, however, his own equable temperament as little resembles as his serene appearance resembles that of the Russian aristocrat with the rugged features of a toil-worn peasant. (We wonder, by the way, what Epstein, to whom Tagore is sitting, will make of that calm, beautiful countenance?) The Indian Teacher's recent conversation with Signor Mussolini formed the subject of very interesting article in *The Manchester Guardian* last week, and also of an interview with him conducted by the wife of Professor Salvadori, an Italian exile in Switzerland, to whom Tagore gave sufficient assurances as to his fundamental opposition to the principles of Fascism and his real object in going to Italy. It must be remembered in this connection that Mussolini had sent "a wonderful gift" of books and reproductions to Santiniketan, for which Tagore, all questions of politics apart, was particularly grateful.

19 August, 1926

### THE METHODIST TIMES

p12(W)

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE: POET AND SEER

(Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian writer and poet, is not on a visit to England)

THE spectacle of rival political parts in a great European State anxiously seeking the benediction of an Eastern poet is a strange one in our time. That such a thing should be possible is some indication of the remarkable moral prestige of the Bengali singer, Rabindranath Tagore.

It would be difficult to find two men differing more widely in outlook and ideals than Tagore and Mussolini. Yet a few weeks ago the Prime Minister of Italy was glad to welcome the Indian poet, and was apparently at pains to demonstrate for him the benefits of Fascism. Indeed, he had won Tagore's gratitude in advance by a magnificent gift of a library of Italian literature for his famous educational institution at Bolpur.

### **In Italy and Germany**

In Italy and in Germany during recent years the writings of Tagore have had immense popularity. In England, the vogue that began with the astonishing Nobel Prize award in 1913 has developed into veneration. His visits to Europe - and to America as well - assume international importance.

But long before he was known at all to Western readers he was a great figure in India. Born in 1861, he came of a famous Bengali family, which for generations had produced religious leaders, artists and poets. One of his brothers, who died recently, was a philosopher and ascetic. It was said that the squirrels would come from the trees and climb on his knees and the birds alight upon his hands.

When he was nineteen Rabindranath Tagore wrote his first novel, but it was his love songs that spread his fame throughout India. Their indescribable charm has survived even the translation into English. Some of the best English renderings are Tagore's own. There is nothing to be compared with them in literature save the Song of Songs.

### **Spiritual Intensity**

Even in the earliest of his love poems there is to be traced a deep spiritual intensity. In his later work the religious imagery becomes more strongly marked. The "Gitanjali", or "Song Offerings," the first and most popular of his English translations, contains passages of rare beauty as well as profound meaning. His delicate fancy loves to play among the children:

"The sleep that flits on baby's eyes - does anybody know from where it comes? yes, there is a rumour that it has its dwelling where, in the fairy village, among shadows of the forest dimly lit with

glow-worms, there hang two timid buds of enchantment. From there it comes to kiss baby's eyes..."

His message may be eastern in its mysticism, but there is nothing in it of the hopeless resignation of Buddhism:-

"I thought that my voyage had come to its end at the last limit of my power - that the path before me was closed, that provisions were exhausted, and the time come to take shelter in a silent obscurity

"But I found that thy will knows no end in me And when old words die out on the tongue, new melodies break forth from the heart, and where the old tracks are lost, new country is revealed with its wonders."

In this song there is surely a picture of the soul turning to God:

"The day is no more, the shadow is upon the earth. It is time that I go to the stream to fill my pitcher

"The evening air is eager with the sad music of the water. Ah, it calls me out into the dusk In the lonely lane there is no passer-by, the wind is up, the ripples are rampant in the river.

"I know not if I shall come back home I know not whom I shall chance to meet There at the fording in the little boat the unknown man plays upon his lute "

It is 25 years ago since Tagore established the Santiniketan ("Abode of Peace"), on the ancestral property near Bolpur. There he has sought to develop his religious and educational ideals among students from all parts of the world. There he has helped to foster the international spirit so much in his heart.

### **Realist, not Dreamer**

He is no vague dreamer. He is a realist, in the best sense of the word. Lover of India as he is, yielding to none in his dislike of Western materialism - he resigned his knighthood after the horror of Amritsar - he has never believed in "non-co-operation". That policy he once described as "making India a prison." He believes that East

and West alike have their contribution to make to the world's salvation.

In his travels in many lands, travels undertaken often in weakness of body, he has been striving for this inter-racial understanding for the overthrow of materialism, and the enthronement of spiritual forces. The work, he realises, is difficult. Like God's choicest gifts, it may be long in coming to perfection.

"When God's will to create shook the sky into fiery whirls,

His power, in the beginning of years, built up its triumph in towering hills.

But His dream waited millions of barren nights, before He smiled on his first shy flower."

**HAROLD DERBYSHIRE.**

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21 August, 1926

**THE DAILY EXPRESS**

p4c3(D)

**Section: THE TALK OF LONDON.**

### **TAGORE AND MUSSOLINI**

I hear that when Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, met Mussolini in Rome their conversation was somewhat restricted. Tagore cannot speak Italian and Mussolini cannot speak English.

However, the Duce arranged a most elaborate programme for the poet, and he was conducted around Rome by the Italian Premier's son and daughter.

### **CURIOUS CLOTHES**

Tagore presents a remarkable appearance. He wears a long flowing robe of original design, and a tall, black velvet cap, reminiscent of the kind seen in Assyrian bas-reliefs.

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21 August, 1926

**THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**

p4c1-2(DE)

### **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

#### **HALF-AN-HOUR WITH INDIA'S GREAT POET AND TEACHER**

RABINDRANATH TAGORE is in London - Tagore the poet, visionary, teacher. You have a glimpse in this picture of him on a London balcony. He is, as you rightly suppose, a bird of passage. It is impossible to conceive him as settled in London.

Quite recently he has visited Italy. In a day or two he will be in Scandinavia. His travels might indicate the man of the world. But in reality he is a man of two abiding places only. You will never surprise him far from home. For always he lives in the very heart of Tagore. By that I do not mean that he is self-centred, but that he lives an inner life that is remote from the flux and turmoil of change and chance.

And his other home is Santiniketan - the Abode of Peace - on the Bengal plain, where he transfuses his poetry and philosophy into the education of youth.

The place in which I was fortunate enough to meet him this week was a private sitting-room of a London hotel - a room colourless, meaningless, utterly without character. Dr Tagore was sitting in a corner of it, yet as remote from it as if he had been in a balloon.

### **SERENITY AND POISE**

A flowing figure - flowing hair, moustache and beard, and flowing creamy draperies. A beautiful figure - serenity and poise incarnate. A poet, but without poetic frenzy. A strangely tranquil influence to encounter in the midst of London sights and sounds. Indeed, I think of my half-hour with him as of an interlude of peace and singing birds in the heart of a cyclone.

It must have demanded much courage on his part to make another journey to Europe. However easily he may retire into the Inner Life, I do not doubt that he would prefer to retire into it from his Abode of Peace in Bengal than from the

sitting-room of a London hotel. And I think he is growing a little tired... "I am nearing the end of my journey," he said, not long ago, "and my feet are weary"

"I confess that I am homesick", he said to me. "I miss the beauties of Nature and the comparative seclusion in which I usually work. Often, too, I wish I was the obscure individual that once I was - that I was not so much before the gaze of the crowd".

I experienced a strange thrill of pleasure on hearing that he had escaped for a few days to Devon and Cornwall. Had the West Country, I wondered, helped to inspire this nostalgia? It did not surprise me in the least to discover that he had been covering the ground of early memories. When he was a lad of 17, desolate in lodgings near Regent's Park - when, I dare say, the contemplative life was not so readily attained - he went to Devonshire and loved it.

### "A BAD BOY!"

"I was a bad boy", he told me whimsically. "I did not love schoolmasters. So I was sent to London to be coached for the Bar..."

And he ran away to Devonshire!

It had long been his dream even then to come to Europe "Almost a pilgrimage it was", he said, "When I was young our people had a very great respect for Europe - for the love of humanity, freedom, and truth, that flourished there. We had the ideal side of Europe perpetually before us. We were fascinated, and came with the highest expectations. There was hope for all - because of this European civilisation. And truly you have done magnificent service to mankind!"

You will gather from this that the gaze of the young Indian is no longer directed exclusively towards the ideal side of Europe.

"He comes with a bias", Dr. Tagore admitted, and the bias is against us. His reaction to oppressive circumstance is the desire to assert himself.

"His self-assertion sometimes takes the form of rudeness", Dr. Tagore explained. "This is not a natural state of mind for him and the result is that he cannot learn as much as he used to do from your people".



Fig. 41 *The Westminster Gazette*  
21 August, 1926, p4

Dr. Tagore spoke sadly of dislocating war changes, though he found them less conspicuous in England than in Italy, Spain, Russia, and, to a certain extent, in France.

"After all", he said, "you have had the discipline of centuries. You have not had recourse to physical force, to violence, to win your right to self-government. True spiritual freedom must be gained by self-control, by self-sacrifice. It cannot be bought, or borrowed. It must come through self-discipline. It has been easier for you than for others to develop political wisdom. You have the instinct for government. You exhibit the

great quality of patience even in your government of other peoples..."

Then again the more sombre note.

"I often wonder," he went on, "if you are not losing that quality, the effects of the war have been disturbing. Minds have undergone perceptible change. Sometimes I feel that you have grown more callous to human suffering. I hope, indeed, it is but a phase..."

But he ended cheerfully. He can still look hopefully upon Europe.

"Your minds are alive and awake", he said. "We have to bring our ideas to this soil for quickening. It is a great continent. To it we must still look for all the great movements. Politically you are divided, culturally you are one".

But it is to the individual, rather than to the organised body, that Dr. Tagore looks for the acceleration of world progress. "*Men are cruel*", he has written, "*but man is kind*". And Man is what his spiritual philosophy of life makes him...

25 August, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p8c3(D)

### **Dr. Tagore and Italy**

We are sure that Dr. RABINDRANATH TAGORE will not be either surprised or hurt by the letter which we publish today from his friend Professor FORMICHI, of the University of Rome, the distinguished Sanskrit scholar. The letter is a reply to Dr. TAGORE's own letter to Mr. C. F. ANDREWS, published in the "Manchester Guardian" of August 5, which itself was intended to clear up certain misapprehensions as to his attitude towards Italian Fascism in general and his estimate of Signor MUSSOLINI in particular. Both letters are entirely friendly in spirit and breathe the philosophic air appropriate to their authors. Nevertheless there was something at issue, something to be cleared up and the clearing-up process could hardly be perfectly easy or perfectly painless. We can only rejoice that between such men it has been carried through with so complete a tolerance and mutual respect.

The plain fact is that in his visit to Italy this year (the earlier visit was a brief and comparatively unimportant one) Dr. TAGORE, partly through his ignorance of Italy dependence on an interpreter, partly through the fact that he was the guest of the Italian Government, could have little, if any, access to independent opinion, or even knowledge of the facts needed of a judgment. He was thus led to form at the time an unduly favourable opinion of the character and working of the present form of government in Italy, and reports of this reaching his friends and admirers in other countries gave rise to much uneasiness. By Signor MUSSOLINI himself he was greatly, and perhaps justly, impressed. None of us can pretend to-day to pass a final judgment on that powerful and singular personality. Dr. TAGORE does not do so himself. He is still impressed, still deeply interested, but his too confident idealism — partly no doubt inspired by the extraordinary kindness and honour with which he was received in Italy — has somewhat shrunk, and, while retaining in full measure his gratitude, he is constrained to admit that the future alone can decide whether we have here as essentially small man

whose features circumstance, largely accidental, have combined to magnify 'into a parody of greatness', or one of more authentic stature. Of this he is content to remain in doubt, but as to the general character of the Fascist regime, its suppression of liberty, its often brutal methods, its exaggerated nationalism its reliance on the sovereign virtue of force, he is in no doubt whatever. Enlightened as to the facts, he finds them utterly opposed to the whole foundation of his doctrine, to all the sympathies of his character and mind. The disillusion must necessarily have been painful, especially coming as it did after the receipt of generous gifts and much kindness. But Dr. TAGORE rightly judged that he owed it to himself, and to the great position which he holds throughout Europe and far beyond, to leave his actual opinion in no sort of doubt. This necessary frankness need in no degree detract from his influence in the intellectual and spiritual region in which his thought and aspiration have met that of the best minds in Italy itself. Italy may yet fulfil his dream as one of the great factors in the spiritual reconciliation of the world.

25 August, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p16c3(D)

### **DR. TAGORE IN ITALY**

#### **His Two Interviews with Signor Mussolini**

*To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.*

Sir, - My attention has been called to the statements published in your paper by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore concerning Italy and Fascism, and as it was I who made the arrangements for the poet's two visits to Italy, accompanied him during his stay in this country, and acted as his interpreter both in public and in private, I feel that I must make certain points clear in connection with his visits to Italy and with the interviews that he accorded. There are perhaps some points on which my memory of the facts may help Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to reconstruct the story of his relations with Italy; that he needs my assistance for this purpose

may be gathered from a letter which he wrote Mr. Andrews and which has already been published.

With regard to Dr. Tagore's first visit to Italy, it is necessary to add to his own account of it that it gave rise to a regrettable misunderstanding. Certain Fascist elements, in fact, had seen in that visit the result of the activities of their opponents, who were supposed to have invited the poet to Milan for political purposes; the poet himself was accused of having made allusions disparaging to the Fascist movement in his speeches and in a short poem on Italy. National feeling was much aroused in consequence. I had been with him during the whole of his visit, and was well aware that neither in his words nor in his intentions had he ever thought of interfering in the politics of a country which he was visiting for the first time. No one better than I knew that he had come to Italy only to receive the homage of affection due to a great poet, and I myself, being a Sanskrit scholar and wholly outside politics had invited him and arranged, together with other friends, for his reception. Naturally, I regretted the misunderstanding and was anxious for an opportunity to remove the cause of it. The chance was not long in presenting itself.

Dr. Tagore invited me to come to his institution at Santiniketan as visiting professor, every year, in fact, he invites some Western scholar in Indology to lecture to his advanced students in Sanskrit. My esteemed colleagues Sylvain Levi, of Paris; Maurice Winternitz, of Prague; and Stenkonow, of Christiania, had preceded me, and all of them had done their best to contribute to the advancement of the institution through their scholarship and the gift of books to the library. I knew that the students regretted that Italian books were lacking, whereas there was abundance of English, French, and German books.

Before sailing for India I assured our Prime Minister that Dr. Tagore was far from being a political intriguer, and that on returning to Bombay from Italy he had expressed himself to the journalists who interviewed him in the most correct manner as far as the Fascist movement was concerned. I also asked Signor Mussolini to grant me a gift of Italian books for the library at Santiniketan, in order to promote cultural relations between the two countries. Signor Mussolini was quite convinced by my assurances as to the poet's attitude, and very generously presented me with an

almost complete library of Italian classics to be conveyed to the Santiniketan library. I thereupon sailed for India, and on my arrival at Santiniketan Dr. Tagore was much touched and very grateful for the gift, of which he recognised the disinterestedness and the noble aim which had inspired it - namely, the desire to establish a channel for the exchange of ideas between Italy and India. The last words of his cable of acknowledgement to Signor Mussolini were:

I assure you that such an expression of sympathy from you as representative of the Italian people will open up a channel of communication for exchange of culture between your country and ours having every possibility of developing into an event of great historical significance.

I spent four months at Santiniketan, and the poet had every opportunity of knowing me. I was fortunate enough to deserve his esteem and affection. We seldom spoke of politics, and when he decided to come to Italy a second time he spontaneously said that in the lectures which he would deliver there he would avoid any subject connected with politics, because, he declared, "politics always lead to controversy".

Having to make the arrangements for his reception, I sent word from Santiniketan to the Italian Foreign Office that Tagore intended to visit Italy, and asked whether I should apply to private committees or whether the Government would prefer to provide for the comfort of the poet. Signor Mussolini at once replied extending the hospitality of the Italian Government to him and his retinue. Dr. Tagore greatly appreciated this token of kindness on the part of the Italian Premier, his only anxiety being whether his health would permit him to perform the journey.

In the meanwhile I sailed for Italy, and on May 14 I received a cable from Dr. Tagore informing me that he and his party were about to sail for Naples. From the moment of his landing in that port I was always by his side, introducing people to him and acting as his interpreter. On May 13 the poet met Signor Mussolini for the first time. I was present at the interview. Signor Mussolini understands English fairly well, so that I had mainly to translate into English the premier's phrases in

Italian. Although they met for the first time they had had so much sympathy for each other from afar that the interview was most cordial. The conversations ran chiefly on the cultural relations to be established between Italy and India and on the lecture which the poet was to deliver in Rome. With almost paternal anxiety Signor Mussolini insisted that the poet should not overstrain himself but take a real rest in Rome; he was extremely pleased when Dr. Tagore informed him that he would stay a whole fortnight in Rome instead of a week. Turning to me, he suggested the chief places of interest which Dr. Tagore should visit, adding: "You have only to let me know whatever may be agreeable to you and I shall be only too happy to provide it for you."

I escorted the poet back to his hotel and asked him his impressions. "Without doubt", he said, "a great personality. There is such a massive strength in that head that one cannot help being reminded of Michelangelo's chisel. And at the same time he is a simple man who makes one feel that it is impossible for him to be the cruel tyrant whom so many are pleased to depict". A reporter who understood and spoke English was then admitted, and asked the poet for a short statement representing what he felt about modern Italy. Dr. Tagore at once penned the following words: "Let me dream that from the fire-bath the immortal soul of Italy will come out clothed in quenchless light".

The poet's admiration for Mussolini went on increasing on account of the reports he heard from various authoritative quarters. On returning from a visit to a certain foreign personage, whose name I am not at liberty to mention, Dr. Tagore declared to me that he thenceforth entertained no doubt about the splendid future of Italy, that as long as Mussolini lived Italy was safe, that history had always been made by great men, that we were to be envied in having this great man, and that he knew at last how to answer our detractors as soon as he should cross the Italian frontier. This feeling of genuine admiration for Mussolini the poet repeated to the reporters who swarmed around him, although it is true that to those who asked him his opinion of the Fascist movement he replied that he had had no opportunity of studying its history and character. I always took the greatest care to translate his words faithfully to those reporters who were

ignorant of English. The majority, however, could communicate directly with him. I wish to emphasise the fact that I acted as his interpreter in nearly all these interviews and that only when I was unavoidably absent I allowed Dr. Assagioli to take my place.

The poet's stay in Rome could not be the rest intended by Mussolini. But this was not in the least due to a "chalked path of programme". Official receptions were reduced to a minimum and limited to those which might be agreeable to Dr. Tagore, notably the visits to the King, to the Governor of Rome, and to the University. The crowd of reporters and admirers asking for autographs was a great strain, but in the afternoons he was able to drive out wherever he pleased, although he often preferred to remain in his room owing to heart trouble.

On the eve of his departure from Rome on June 14 Dr. Tagore was again received by Mussolini. This second interview was even more cordial than the first. The poet said to the Premier that there is a creative force lying dormant in the intimate nature of all things. It is the exclusive call of great personalities to set that force working. Science provides the materials, the personality takes possession of them and, waking up the soul which is in them, accomplishes the work of creation. Italy provided with a personality seemed to him the fittest medium for bringing the Asiatic and European civilisations close to each other, for allowing the dream and mission of this whole existence to become a living reality. "You are, Excellency", he added, "the most misrepresented man in the world". "I know it", Signor Mussolini answered smiling "but how can I help it!" The conversation then turned on the subject of the scholarships to be created in order to provide for an exchange of students between Italy and India. The poet further declared that he greatly wished to make the personal acquaintance of the great Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, whose philosophy is so akin to that of India. Signor Mussolini asked me to arrange the interview, as Croce was absent from home. This I did by telegram, and the interview took place the following day. Dr. Tagore finally expressed the wish to possess a portrait of Mussolini. The request was immediately granted and the Premier sent him a beautiful handsomely framed photograph

of himself, on which he wrote the words "With deep admiration", followed by his signature.

I accompanied Dr. Tagore during the rest of his journey through Italy, which was a triumphal progress, until he crossed the frontier at Domodossola on June 22. A cordial letter from Dr. Tagore, then at Villeneuve, dated June 25, contained the following phrase: "My mind is drinking copious draughts of peace and rest, and I feel gloriously happy". There was no hint of the distortion which publicity sometimes makes the feature of a poet "whose chief value is not in his opinions, but in his creations". I could not quite grasp the meaning of this hint at the time.

A second letter dated July 7 from Zurich then reached me. Dr. Tagore wrote that he felt very unhappy because since he had left Italy numerous facts had been brought to his notice about the methods of Fascism which challenged the judgment of humanity and prevented him from remaining silently neutral. Twenty days later a third letter reached me. It announced war and brought under my eyes the writing that has given rise to the present statement. The rest is silence". - Yours, &c.,

**CARLO FORMICHI, Professor of Sanskrit at  
the University of Rome.**

*Rome, August 14.*

27 August, 1926

## THE NEW LEADER

p9-10(V)

### A Talk with Rabindranath Tagore

**By H. N. Brailsford**

LAST WEEK, in the incongruous surroundings of a hotel drawing-room, I met Rabindranath Tagore. Once before I had seen this astonishingly beautiful figure. At the Queen's Hall many years ago, during a performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, I saw him a few yards away. Not very far from him, sat Mr. Arthur Balfour (as he then was). The contrast of the two heads fascinated me. Each seemed to realise the high-

est type of two races: each suggested in its own way refinement and intellectual power and that rare distinction which crowns a man amid a crowd. As the familiar music swept over us I could not refrain from watching the two minds. Mr. Balfour's expression with his mobile and expressive features; there was for me no mystery here; he was living in a world of sound outside himself; He was feeling what I felt. But Tagore? His face wore through all the varying movements a gentle and unchanging smile. But was it his pleasure in the music which caused it? I did not know, but I guessed that it was rather from some deep well of inner peace that he drew the serene happiness which his face expressed. For all his dignity and maturity he seemed to me younger, and in his proud way simpler, than the Western men around him.

As he talked to me this former impression came back. The beauty of this poet's face was so arresting that at moments I found it hard to listen. A view of life had somehow eternalised itself in these harmonious lines. The hair, which had been black, was now iron-grey, but the smooth brow seemed no older. Everything about him, even the simple dignity of his plain linen robe, suggested a mind at one with itself. But it was evident that the contrast between his own outlook and ours. For, after a few words about mutual friends and his own movements, he told me of the alien impression left on him from his journeys across Europe. My recollection, I fear, is a poor substitute for what he actually said, a mere summary from which the life has gone.

**Tagore:** The chief impression which Europe left on me was one of unhappiness and unrest. Everywhere there was strife and suspicion. That was the meaning of the Customs House in Alsace, where men were herded about and penned behind barriers. The same sense of national strife had come to me even more forcibly at Darmstadt during my previous visit to Germany, when the French were in the Ruhr. One felt the hate of race for race dominating all the life of this Continent. And then in Vienna the same thing - one day a great procession of workers, and the next day a procession of the opposing party. I hardly know what the exact controversy was, but one felt the class war. Everywhere I had this sense of unhappiness and strife

**Myself:** Then do you put this national strife and the class war on the same moral level?

**Tagore:** No. The class war may be necessary, and in a sense right. It is a proper protest against social injustice. But these manifestations of it in Vienna helped to swell the impression of an uneasy and unhappy civilisation.

But I became aware of something further. You are no longer satisfied with your civilisation. Everywhere I hear the note of criticism. For the first time in several centuries, Englishmen are dissatisfied with themselves and the world in which they live. That is an amazing thing and a new thing. It never happened in this country before. Your old complacency is gone.

**Myself:** Yes, the Americans are the only people left who seem completely satisfied and optimistic.

**Tagore:** Ah! Those Americans! (An eloquent wave of the hand) Our Indian attitude towards your civilisation has completely changed in my life-time. When I was a young man we loved it and venerated it. We absorbed your great writers, from Burke to Matthew Arnold. We respected their civilisation - even to excess. But to-day that is completely changed, and the reaction in its turn has gone to excess. The young generation is hostile, even contemptuous.

Why has this happened? I think it is that your industrial materialism has meantime invaded India. We see it everywhere; we feel it crushing our spirit. And we revolt against your worship of wealth.

**Myself:** Is our century really worse in its love of wealth than those that went before?

**Tagore:** Yes, I think it is. We know by tradition what the old India was like. Its real existence was lived in the village community. There the motive and purpose of life was never the getting of wealth. A teacher would come to the village; disciples would gather round him. They were penniless, but those



**Fig. 42 Rabindranath Tagore**  
From the drawing by William Rothenstein  
*The New Leader*, 27 August, 1926, pp.9-10

who had some wealth in this society were proud to care for them and feed them. There was, of course, inequality - natural inequality. But the rich did not keep their wealth for themselves. A rich man who did so, was soon ostracised by society. No money in that society was not the purpose of life.

**Myself:** And yet even in our society is it ever more than a minute minority who can aim at the acquisition of unlimited wealth?

**Tagore:** No, but the vast scale of modern wealth makes a difference. By its grandeur and immensity it seems to lose its meanness. And it dazzles and intimidates even those who never dream of wealth for themselves. It works as bribery works.



The Indian Poet, Rabindranath Tagore, in Berlin, with Mrs. Mahalanobis, Wife of his Friend and Travelling Companion

Fig. 43 *The Sphere*  
28 August, 1926, p269

Offer a man a bribe of £5, and he will reject it with indignation. But offer him a million. . The mere scale of this wealth of yours makes a difference. It is so immense that it acquires a certain nobility. It is not a mere question of individual motive. Your whole civilisation, with its science and its machinery, is organised for the production of gigantic wealth. It must obey this remorseless purpose. And it must have its victims. That is our place in the scheme. . Tell me, do you think that Labour in this country can free itself from the purpose of the system? Will it be capable of other views when it gains power?

*Myself:* Socialism is a high and difficult creed. A million vote for it, a hundred understand it. And yet consider the revelation of the mind of the mass which we had in the general Strike. Its motive was sympathy with a specially ill-used section of our workers. It was a superb demonstration of the power of fraternity as a motive.

*Tagore:* And yet as we look at what your civilisation has become, it seems to us that its material development has raced ahead of man's moral development. Its scale is too vast for him: it overawes him and masters him.

*Myself:* The child in charge of the aeroplane!

*Tagore:* You are too prosperous - too prosperous to know or understand what your civilisation is doing to its victims. Will the burden ever grow too heavy for you?

*Myself:* You call it a burden? But the Imperial Englishman does not feel this burden's weight. He rejoices to use his strength.

*Tagore:* Yes. We differ in energy. In a climate so hot as ours perhaps no civilisation can maintain itself in vigour for more than a few centuries.

But I will not attempt to record more of this conversation. It turned on a play of Tagore's which had puzzled me. As he expounded it, we kept returning to the thought which had run like a just visible thread through his talk. Could men free themselves from the obsession of wealth-getting? Could they strip the imposing mask of nobility which its vast scale gives to our system of civilisation? Had its victims anything to hope from the self-criticism and disillusionment which he detected in us? We talked of these things again and again, neither of us daring to give to these questions a decided answer.

Outside the hotel I mounted my bicycle, and after a moment of bewilderment, I adjusted myself to the familiar London scene again. The stream of wheeled things flowed noisily up Brompton Road and round Hyde Park Corner, elephantine buses, swift and luxurious cars. It raced and panted in its exuberant energy, hoarse in its chase of wealth, but I was among it, two wheels amid the thousand wheels. It seemed to me, somehow, more foreign and irrelevant than usual. I could hear the gentle, courteous voice again, as I turned into the quiet of the Green park, "And this system must have its victims." And now I was passing the Grenadier's barracks. "Left, right; left, right" - a squad of healthy young men were making imperial motions. The butt

of a rifle clattered noisily on the ground, as it saluted some incarnation of the system. But what a victim to choose!

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*28 August, 1926*

### **THE GRAPHIC**

p342(W)

### **TAGORE OF INDIA**

The famous Indian writer has been on a visit to London, and we may expect a new book by him in English, during the autumn or the winter.

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*1 September, 1926*

### **THE CORNISHMAN AND CORNISH TELEGRAPH**

p4c5(D)

### **SIR RABINDRANATH IN ITALY**

Aldo Sorani met Rabindranath Tagore in Florence and in my old newspaper, the "San Francisco examiners," he says the Indian mystic thought that even the World War which interrupted and menaced the cultural unity of the East and Western civilizations will not permanently keep them from existing harmoniously to fulfil their separate missions. He added:

"You are to-day more crude, more wilful, more exacting, and, even after the war, more aggressive and at variance. Yet the greater danger for you would lie in the acquired habit of belief in discord, as an ineluctable and fatal law of life, and, above all, in believing necessary and beautiful the interior discord, that is to say, the warring of man's soul with itself. There are people to-day who hold that true life lies preciously in this continual contradiction with themselves, this intimate fight of ideas, sentiments, passions. It is a dangerous error. The ideal life consists not in a state of perpetual contradiction with ourselves and with others, for life should achieve harmony within us, it should radiate peace and union. It is true, however, that the catastrophe of the war suffices to explain this

restlessness within and without, which nevertheless cannot endure for ever. The day will come when it will be borne in upon you that the desire for exterior benefits and their accumulations is useless and dangerous, and you will feel the need of a true peace and to put order in your houses and your souls. You will then recognise that much you held as good is not so in reality, but is the rubbish of centuries, and then you will set yourselves to sweep away the dross that to-day hampers and oppresses you. Then, indeed, you will possess, both within and without, a new land of promise whereon to build, wherein to show the seed of coming harvests, and you will reach a higher plane of civilization and neighbourly life with others and with yourselves." "Do you share the belief of some others that assistance for this necessary work of clearance and rebuilding could profitably come to us from America?" he was asked.

"No, America is too far away, too much a prey also to the very same ills that agitate Europe, too preoccupied with this world's goods, and too rich. One could quote to the words of Christ: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" For America to prove of aid and inspiration to Europe, it would behoove her also to have gone through the deep waters of calamity. Moreover, America is not free. We in India are, it is true, under a foreign domination but we are freer men by far than Americans spiritually freer".

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*3 September, 1926*

### **THE FRIEND**

p775(W)

### **Tagore and Fascist Philosophy**

During a recent visit to Italy, Rabindranath Tagore submitted in a weak moment to the importunities of the interviewers, with the almost inevitable result that he was reported throughout the world as having given some sort of blessing to the Fascist regime and philosophy alike

In a recent letter to his friend and colleague, C. F. Andrews, he has sought to correct this impression. He does not pretend to judge what internal conditions in Italy have necessitated for the Italian people by way of political expedients, but he insists that "the methods and the principles of Fascism concern all humanity", and that, "it is absurd to imagine that I could ever support a movement which ruthlessly suppresses freedom of expression, enforces observances that are against individual conscience, and walks through a blood-stained path of violence and stealthy crime".

"It would be most foolish, if it were not almost criminal for me", he continues, "to express my admiration for a political ideal which openly declares its loyalty to brute force as the motive power of civilisation"

He does not deny certain material benefits accruing to Italy under Fascism, but he emphasises the appalling moral cost at which they have been purchased and characterises the process as "killing the goose for the sake of the golden eggs".

Again, he admits the powerful impression made upon him by Mussolini, but he prefers to reserve judgment as to whether the Duce is one of the "Masters of History", or whether, after all, "through a combination of accidents", the features of an essentially small person have been magnified "into a parody of greatness".

It would be a great mistake to assume that everything in Fascism is bad or that its leader is a pure incarnation of evil. But it is reassuring to find that, after all, Tagore, the apostle of the essential Christian virtues of peace and love, has not been deluded by the glamour of personality and the pomp of self-assertive power which tend to obscure the essentially pagan and destructive philosophy of Fascism.

4 September, 1926

### THE INQUIRER

p560(V);

Another distinguished Indian in this country is lending support to Dr. Tagore's recent emphatic statement about the harm which many of the films

shown in this country are doing. This is Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, K.C.I.E., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay, and a member of the house of Assembly, who is a friend of both Sir Jagadish Bose and Tagore. The good that might be done by a better type of film is, he believes, little realized, but he has no doubt about it himself, and he is convinced that the wireless has immense possibilities, also, in a vast audience, mostly illiterate, to whom it would literally speak.

4 September, 1926

### THE PASSING SHOW

p10(V)

WHILE Rabindranath Tagore was sitting for Mr. Epstein recently, he told me that he had never been satisfied with any artistic representation of himself. "When I want an exact reproduction of my face," said he, "I go to a photographer. No artist should be content with doing a mere physiognomical likeness". I asked him whether there was any likelihood of his resuming his knighthood. He shook his head and countered with: "Is there any likelihood of India getting Home Rule?"

4 September, 1926

### THE SPHERE

p viii (Special Supplement)

Some scepticism has been evoked by the announcement that Mr. Epstein, the renowned sculptor, is engaged in carving a statue of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald in the morning, and one of Sir Rabindranath Tagore in the afternoon.

Personally I can see nothing impossible in this feat. All the sculptor has to do is to put a distinguishing mark on each piece of incomplete statuary to show which man it is intended to represent, and he can then resume his work without any *arrière-pensée*.

That is the beauty of modern sculptor. To carve a statue of a man any model or none suffices.

15 September, 1926

# THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p6c1-2(D)

## FASCIST WAY WITH TAGORE

### Anathematised, but Suppressed

(From our Rome Correspondent.)

It is typical of present conditions in Italy that the public should constantly find in its daily papers replies to arguments and assertions which it did not know had ever been made. If some prominent personage abroad makes a statement considered to reflect adversely upon the Fascist regime, one can be tolerably sure that what he says will not be reported in Italy, unless it is so obviously idiotic that the Governmental press can refute it without effort. When anybody delivers a serious criticism of Italian affairs which is not wholly favourable to the Government the press passes it over in total silence. Nobody would hear anything about it (except those few persons who pursue the foreign press) were not the journalists of the official press sometimes so sensitive as to be unable to refrain from replying with warmth to what they have themselves read but not passed on to the reader. The reader is then perplexed to find in his paper a bitter attack upon M. This or Herr That as a defamer of Italy and an unscrupulous liar, without having any clear idea what the personage in question has done to earn the comment.

A case in point is that of Rabindranath Tagore. The Indian poet's visit here as the guest of Signor Mussolini was given much publicity. It was hinted that this visit signified an unofficial recantation on his part of some judgments adverse to Fascism uttered by him in the course of a previous visit. The papers sent their special correspondents to visit him, and these supplied ample interviews full of admiring expressions which they felt Tagore ought in these circumstances to have pronounced on the subject of Mussolini and the regime. Tagore returned to London, and in his letter to Mr. C. F. Andrews, published in the "Manchester Guardian", made it clear that he had never made any such statements and was but moderately impressed with the virtues of Fascist Italy. No mention of the letter

or of its contents got into the Italian press, although it was widely read in journalistic circles. One Opposition paper considered for some time whether it could take the risk of publishing a translation of it, and decided it could not. But somebody on the staff of the "Popolo d'Italia" (edited by Mussolini's brother) could not hold his tongue, with the result that the following editorial crept into that paper's pages:

## THE OLD HARPOON

When the unemployed hangers-on of certain so-called circles of culture decided to invite the celebrated Indian poet Tagore to tour the country we were not enthusiastic for the idea. Italy, by good fortune for herself and the world, has plenty of literary schools and of art in general, and has nothing to learn from the Indians. Anyway, Mr. Rabindranath, Poet of Flowers, Stars, and Pounds Sterling, unbuttoned his tunic and preached in broken English to various provincial gatherings overcome by the imbecile attraction of the exotic and the international. After this experience Tagore returned a second time to Italy, accepted the homages of the Prime Minister, and flaunted his feathers in the principal towns of Italy. Again he failed to arouse our sympathy. A poet who does not feel the tragedy of his own people is for us not a poet but a pseudo-mystic. This dishonest Tartuffe (Santone) whom the idiocy of others has promoted to the stature of greatness profited by Italy's traditional and lordly hospitality towards her guests. Italy who saw in him the symbol of the great Indian people and its terrifying dilemmas. Tagore then re-crossed the frontier and immediately began to spit poison against Italy. Who cares? Italy laughs at Tagore and those who brought this unctuous and insupportable fellow in our midst.

So the unfortunate Italian reader is left to guess between the lines what the recently applauded sage can have said or done to infuriate to this degree the personal organ of Signor Mussolini.

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16 September, 1926

**THE TIMES**

p11c7(D)

**Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who has been lecturing in Berlin, was received by President von Hindenburg yesterday.

20 September, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p6c7(D)

**DR. TAGORE AND FASCISM.**

*To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.*

Sir, - Professor Formichi is one of my best friends in Europe, and I do not wish to enter into a controversy with him about a subject that has already given him pain. It is enough that there has been a misunderstanding for which I myself must acknowledge my own share of the blame.

The literature that had reached me before I started for Italy was full of condemnation against Fascism and its leaders. And this was why it amazed me when the magnificent gift of an Italian Library came to our institution directly from Mussolini, proving in a most appropriate manner his appreciation of our own cause. This generous expression of sympathy was followed by his lending to Santiniketan the service of Dr. Tucci, for whose scholarship I have an unbounded admiration.

When, owing to this fact, my mind was hesitating between the two contrary inclinations, every evidence in favour of the present Government of Italy brought great relief to me. Such evidences appeared to me at that time as numerous, and what gave a special weight to them was the favourable testimony of some English residents in Italy whom I chanced to meet. All this helped to make me feel at ease when I enjoyed the hospitality of the Italian Government, also to cherish the expectation that a channel of communication would be opened through Italy that would bring India closer into touch with Europe. There was every chance of such an expectation being fulfilled because of the fact that

in the present-day Italy a human personality could make its mind work directly, and not through the wilderness of pulleys and wheels of a complex machinery of administration.

It may be because of the great attraction that we have in the East not so much for an efficient organisation as for some living genius in all departments of society that I was naturally drawn to the vision of a creative mind, working in the person of Mussolini, moulding the destiny of Italy, infusing life into her from his own abundant life when she showed any sign of feebleness. That such was the case had often been declared to me by all types of men, commencing with the captain of the steamer that brought me to Europe and ending with a professor who believed in a spiritual significance of civilisation. For sometime I felt almost elated with the idea that an object-lesson was being offered by Italy to show that an ample room could be made for human personality in the heart of a political machine, modulating its rhythm in sympathy with the movement of a great living mind.

But this does not at all mean that I had any sympathy for the methods of Fascism, the nature of which I generally came to learn at a later date. Even during my stay in Italy I was shocked and surprised when an Englishman in Rome, in his talk to me, tried to defend the Italian Government for forcing the teaching of Roman Catholicism through the educational institutions, saying that the State as an organism has the natural right, for the sake of its welfare, to choose its own particular religion and never to allow individuals to exercise their own choice. We personally know from modern instances in India what a blind power of darkness religious sectarianism does represent, often giving rise to a fury of blasphemous inhumanity. European history also reveals the terrible danger of an epicureanism of destructive passion when religion makes its alliance with physical force and material power. The talk with the Englishman suddenly made me aware, for the first time in my tour, of the stifled voice and tortured conscience in Italy, of the dominance of ruthless coercion that stood darkly hidden behind the screen on which was thrown the shadow picture of prosperity and peace. It struck me all the more strongly because I knew that there was a time when Mussolini had openly expressed his hatred of all religions in an extravagant language

of abhorrence. For the first time it made me suspect that possibly there was something unnatural in the high-pitched protestation of happiness by the people whom I met, that it rang loudly upon the dread hush of a universal fear.

I need not go into detail about the communications that were poured upon me by the victims of Fascism when I came out of Italy. I felt bound to assure my friends that the rumour which spread the impression that I supported Fascism as an ideal was unjust to me, that I still decried the despotic intimidation of spirit that humiliates the inner man in order to decorate him with a costly semblance of an outer glory.

At the same time I must confess that the more one studies the conditions of different European Governments the more one is convinced that political freedom of the people, however desirable as an idea, cannot be attained merely through the help of an organisation. Like the spiritual freedom in an individual, it can only be won by a nation through self-discipline, through a self-respecting trustworthiness that naturally produces mutual trust, through voluntary submission to law and order. Where mastery of self is feeble the tyranny from outside compulsion is inevitable. It has become evident to us all that the best instrument of the freedom for the people has been created and mastered by the British nation only because it is one with its own character. Yours, &c.,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Berlin, September 15.

The letter from Professor Formichi to which Dr Tagore refers appeared in our issue of August 25 - Ed 'GUARD'.

25 September, 1926

**THE INQUIRER**

p599(W)

### EUCKEN AND TAGORE

"THE death of Professor Eucken occurred," says the Berlin correspondent of The Observer, "at the moment when Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Germany... Many years ago, India's philosophers conveyed the expression of appreciation and

gratitude to the Jena professor in a letter written in Rabindranath Tagore's own hand. Since then the fame of the Indian poet has grown, and that of Eucken came to be regarded as the beacon-light of a past generation - the generation known in his own country as the Wilhelmine era, the age of loud self-seeking, mechanization, and commercialism.

"The Haeckel of spiritual science' is one of the best phrases ever coined to describe the life-work of the man who never left his quiet academic circles in Jena save to follow a call to America and judge for himself, as exchange professor, the new age in its most perfectly specialized form. The Eucken League is a living tribute to his influence on his generation. If, as many enthusiasts believe, the greater part of Eucken's mission was fulfilled when the backbone of militarism was broken, his spirited protest shortly after his eightieth birthday against petty official tyranny in the Italianized South Tyrol proved him as ardent a patriot as ever he had been Christian, working for the peace and understanding of nations.. In the many tributes to his life-work contributed to the German Press, the one thought constantly recurs that the day of the great professors is over. It is not that Germany will bring forth brains less powerful or spirits less ardent, but that the mechanical age he waged war against has triumphed in ways he never foresaw, and will of necessity produce philosophers born of its own changed conditions

4 October, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p10(c)(D)

### DR. TAGORE TO VISIT RUSSIA

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has received a special invitation from the Government of the Soviet Republic for a visit to Russia, and it is believed that he will accept the invitation. A special envoy of the Soviet Government will go to Berlin, where Dr. Tagore is at present, to escort him to Moscow.

*5 October, 1926***THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p12c3(D)

**Betraying Civilisation**

Dr. Tagore made to the Western world the other day a very grave appeal to consider the danger to the prestige of our civilisation that comes of flooding the East with crude and sensational films. His argument applies with equal, perhaps with added, force to our African colonies. The picture of the white man's life that is daily put before millions of natives in whom the critical faculty is quite undeveloped presents an entirely false view of our social standards, our principles, our conduct of affairs. Of what profit are integrity in administration, a scrupulous regard for justice, an earnest campaign for education, and the prosecution of an ultimate ideal of self-government in our dependencies if day in and day out the folk we are trying to convince and to train are given the impression that ours is a shameless, frivolous, and crook-infested society? Sir HESKETH BELL, who is concerned with the problem that the film in Africa presents, suggests in the "Times" that a remedy might be found in the preparation of two versions of any film that contains incidents likely to bring the white races into disrepute – one of them expurgated for native consumption. It is a bitter commentary on the mass of film production that such a suggestion would be thought worth making. But whatever its advantages it hardly seems feasible. We prefer to look ultimately to action in the African dependencies themselves such as has already begun to take shape in India. There some of the Stage rulers, despairing of the film in its present development as entertainment for their people, have prohibited it, while others have taken the more progressive course of encouraging by practical aid the making and showing of films of what is finest in Eastern and what is most distinctive in Western life. In the African States ample means for censorship exist. They should be exercised, but with censorship a constructive policy is needed. There are few fields more valuable than this for the encouragement of the Colonial Office.

*5 November, 1926***THE BIRMINGHAM POST**

p3c5(D)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

In 1913 Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for his contributions to literature. This was a marvellous award, and no words seemed too strong in which to praise the Bengali poet. Mr. Edward J. Thompson, Lecturer in Bengali in the University of Oxford, has written an extremely capable work of biography and criticism entitled "Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist" (Oxford University Press, 10s. 6d.). Mr. Thompson, referring to the Nobel award, says: "The famous success followed which has had so complete a reversal... The same folk who to-day are sneering at his fame, and treating him as an exposed charlatan, in 1913 were finding his work 'of supreme beauty, a rare and wondrous thing' and 'of trance-like beauty.'" Mr. Thompson tells us how people have resented what Tagore said about the war, especially in his "Creative Unity" in 1922. His biographer declares: "No reputation which was in reality so well founded ever suffered so greatly."

Mr. Thompson is so sincere that he brings forward a series of grounds of strongly adverse criticism; but he also presents the other side. With Tagore's politics, with his general nationalist sympathies, from a literary point of view we are only indirectly concerned. So with regard to his renunciation of his knighthood, and with his relations to Mr. Gandhi. We hardly think it necessary to bring them forward as the basis of literary criticism any more than to emphasise his refusal to countenance the non-co-operationists. Tagore is a great internationalist. His conceptions of education in the wonderful school he has established at Santiniketan shows that. In this World-University which he has projected at Santiniketan "all creeds and religions will be studied, all literatures, and the modern scientific achievements of East and West alike." He offers a vision of universal culture. Mr. Thompson is concerned with Tagore as poet and Dramatist. His view, in final summary, is that Tagore's ultimate place will not be simply amongst the poets of India, but amongst those of the world.

The amount of solid work on which the views expressed in this book are grounded is amazing. Tagore's published verse and dramas contain five times as many lines as do Milton's, whilst the non-dramatic works of Tagore in prose are more than twice the length of his poetry. As the enormous amount of Tagore's Bengali writing is now described at a length never previously approached, we cannot but be deeply grateful to Mr. Thompson for fuller material than has ever been placed before the English reader to judge of the scope and merit of Tagore's work. Mr. Thompson has rendered a service which would have been well-nigh impossible had it not been a labour of love and a work of conviction.

6 November, 1926

### THE INQUIRER

p695-696(W)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

DR. E.J. THOMPSON'S new volume, 'Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist'\* is much more substantial than his book on the same subject published five years ago. In the excellent bibliography which is appended to the present work he refers to the former as "mistaken in some respects, but accurate in the main section (I believe)." The author's characteristic candour and modesty may be observed here. With far less qualifications at command many a writer, we fear, has ere now written much more confidently on Indian subjects. Dr. Thomson - who tells us his new book was accepted as a thesis for the degree of Ph.D. by the London University, though it was not written with that view - is exceptionally qualified for the task which he has undertaken. He has long resided among Indians and enjoyed intimate friendship with them; he has sympathetically studied their customs, religions, literature, and arts; and he has not only steeped himself in the huge mass of Tagore's writings, in verse and prose, to a degree which we imagine is quite unique, but has had the advantage of much

personal intercourse with the great writer himself. It may be confidently asserted that no book is likely to supersede this in the near future, either as a store of information and reference for the English student or as any analysis of Tagore's genius and methods, with a presentation of his affiliations to English literature. Not least among the reassurances of the book is the author's obvious awareness of the weaker and less attractive, as well as the stronger and nobler features of the immensely varied work upon which he has bestowed so much scholarly study. How immense in bulk as well as variety Tagore's literary output has been may be gathered from the following statements. "Milton's English verse is less than 18,000 lines; Rabindranath Tagore's published verse and dramas, the subject of the present study, amount to 100,000 or their equivalent. His non-dramatic prose, in the collected edition of his works now in process, will be in the proportion, to his verse and dramas, of seven enormous volumes to three" (p. vii). Born in 1861 he began early. "Before he was eighteen, he had published nearly seven thousand lines of verse, and a great quantity of prose" (p. 30). His tales are as innumerable as they are popular, but further we read: "It is by his songs that he is best known, and it has to be added that he has composed the music as well as the words 'There can be no doubt,' said the poet to me, 'that I have conquered my people by my songs. I have heard even drivers of bullock-carts singing my latest and most up-to-date songs.' And he laughed in his tremulous, pleased way" (p. 147). And in addition to all this mass of recognized literature we learn that he has contributed copiously but anonymously to magazines and other periodicals, where his productions lie hidden for future editors, if they will, to dig out.

Poet, dramatist, tale-teller, song-writer, and educationist, Tagore has been actor, composer, and public singer also. Those of us who may have pictured him as merely the mystic dreamer, or at best the devout theist and subtle and Oriental thinker, may learn from Mr. Thompson's pages how much vivid activity and strenuous effort he can put forth on occasion. His emotions range very widely; and the mind that can find such exquisite joy in noting the transient beauties of the sky and the clouds, birds and flowers, and entertain itself (as well as his folk) with snatches

\*Oxford University Press (Humphrey Milford). Pp 327, ind., port., illus. 10s 6d.

of melody and dancing rhythms, is evidently capable of fiery indignation, lofty scorn, and withering contempt. For, as revealed here - and indeed as well known already - Tagore has been and is an energetic politician and citizen; and sometimes in his sixty-five years (as yet) he, like our own Milton, has felt the arrest of his impulse (if not of his power) to write mere verse, so intensely have his emotions been kindled by the hard facts of life, whether as related to his own race or to the nations of mankind at large. Mr. Thompson writes like a good Englishman, while clearly sympathizing with much that Tagore has said and written in this direction; and we may believe that his account of Tagore will be all the more favourably received by people in this country seeing that he firmly, while respectfully, marks down particulars in which (as he judges) the Indian has spoken unjustly of the English and of Western civilization in general. The subject may be studied with much profit, however, in these pages; and any reader who may be chiefly drawn to them by their wealth of poetic illustration and instructive commentary will do Tagore much less than justice if he does not also ask himself some searching questions on the past and present policy of the British in India.

Into that difficult matter, however, we must not enter here, nor may we dwell on the tempting topic of the Brahmo Samaj in relation to Tagore's life and thought. It must be sufficient for us to have indicated something of the high importance of this noteworthy volume which certainly no intelligent lover of literature can afford to neglect. We may close by quoting a part of Mr. Thompson's "Epilogue." He warns the reader against any underestimate of Tagore's position as a writer through such "qualifications of the poet's genius" as he has felt bound to make. He then proceeds:

"He is strong in abstract ideas, as we should expect in an Indian. These glimmer through early lyric and later drama alike. But his thought is strangely concrete, easy for a Westerner to follow, perhaps because his mind has not taken a metaphysical turn. This makes the finding of resemblances to Western poets attractive and easy. But (to take an example) when his resemblance to Tennyson has been noted - his interest in scientific speculation and discovery, his vast preponderance of decorative work, the long

and steady exercise of his poetical faculties - we note the difference: his many-sided touch with active life, the freedom of his mysticism, at any rate in its later expressions, from any speculative elements such as we find in vastness, his power of being aloofly intellectual and lonely. Similarly, when he is put side by side with Victor Hugo, and we note the volume and formal variety of the work of both writers and their political energy, and note also how very much of their work is on a lofty but still definitely secondary plane, rhetorical or descriptive or didactic, there remain differences, of subtler thought in the Indian, of more constant fire in the Frenchman.

"To sum up, he faces both East and West, filial to both, deeply indebted to both. His personality hereafter will attract hardly less attention than his poetry, so strangely previous a figure must he seem, when posterity sees him. He has been both of his nation, and not of it; his genius has been born of Indian thought, not of poets and philosophers alone but of the common people, yet it has been fostered by Western thought and by English literature; he has been the mightiest of national voices, yet has stood aside from his own folk in more than one angry controversy. His poetry presents the most varied (output) in the history of Indian achievement."

Here Mr. Thompson cites a passage from Matthew Arnold's 'Essay on Wordsworth,' in which that writer, having "spoken lightly of Wordsworthians" confesses "But I am a Wordsworthian myself." The author says in conclusion:

"I have spoken lightly of Tagorites. But after all the blasphemy I have uttered against his flutes and flowers, after all my counsels that his lost travellers, if caught, be made away with, I conclude by claiming confidently that his output is one of fine, and often great, poetry. It contains an enormous body of work of almost, if not quite, the highest beauty, and it is of many kinds.. Whether he can so control those rich gifts of subtle thought and fancy and observation, which draw off so much of his strength, that he may yet produce something that may be the crown of his lifework, I doubt. But leaving aside the half-dozen great names, we may take any poet we choose and set out his masterpieces; and from what Rabindranath has already done we can set beside them

'Chitrangada' and 'The Curse at Farewell,' 'Urvashi' and 'The Farewell to Heaven,' 'Ahalya,' 'The Cloud Messenger,' 'Evening, Moonlight, Sea-Waves' and the great land-storms of 'Kalpana,' 'Sati,' 'Gandhari's Prayer,' 'Karna and Kunti,' the opening hell-scene of 'Narak-Bas,' the grim narratives of 'Katha' the quieter beauty of the stories of 'Palataka,' the great odes of 'Balaka,' and scores of dancing songs of every period of his half-century of incessant activity. The assessment of final values cannot be done in this generation; but already it is clear that his ultimate place will be not simply among India's poets, but among those of the world" (pp. 302-4).

A word should be added in appreciation of the illustrations, especially of the noble portrait which forms the frontis piece.

9 November, 1926

#### THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p8c6(D)

##### Tagore on the Continent

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore is spending a month in Paris before returning to India and after a notably successful speaking tour in Germany. Beginning at Hamburg, the poet gave readings from his poems in Bengali and lectured in English in a number of cities - Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Dusseldorf, and elsewhere.

For some half dozen years or so the popularity of his books in German translations has been remarkable. This was reflected in the audiences of this latest visit. They were everywhere good, and in some places, I am told, very large. In Berlin a representative reception was arranged for Dr. Tagore, and a dinner in his honour was given by Dr. Becker, the Minister of Education.

It is worth remarking, by the way, that Dr. Tagore's recent brush with Fascism does not seem to have damaged his sales in Italy. A friend who inquired among the bookshops last month found that at least fifteen of his books are listed as being translated into Italian and published in popular editions. The demand, he was informed, was continuous.

10 November, 1926

#### THE DAILY EXPRESS

p4c3(D)

##### Section: THE TALK OF LONDON

##### BETTER

RABINDRANATH TAGORE's illness cannot have been serious for he was well enough yesterday to make a speech on the great Hungarian writer Jokai. He will return to India in a few days.

14 November, 1926

#### THE OBSERVER

p12c3(S)

##### DR. TAGORE IN HUNGARY

(From Our Own correspondent.)

BUDAPEST, November 8

The state of Rabindranath Tagore's health is reported to have undergone a decided improvement since his arrival at Balatonfured, and it is expected that he will shortly start for India, having abandoned his intention of visiting Riviera.

Dr. Tagore has planted a lime tree near the statue of Sandor Kisfaludy (a famous Hungarian poet who lived in the early part of the nineteenth century) "in remembrance of the renewal of life force" which came to him on Hungarian soil, and is reported to have written several poems extolling the beauties of the Balaton, which he calls "the lake of smiling quietude". He has also laid a wreath on the memorial erected last year to Hungary's most famous novelist, Maurice Jokai, fifty of whose novels (translated in English) are to be included in the library of the University founded by the poet of Bengal.

16 November, 1926

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p16c5(D)

**Section: PAGES IN WAITING**

**An Indian Author**

Another book by Sir Rabindranath Tagore may be expected in the early part of the New Year. He does not write books in English, but in his native Bengali, and they are translated, sometimes by himself. He has a great store of literary work in Bengali to draw upon for his Western readers. He has written more in verse than Milton wrote, he has a number of dramas to his credit, and many novels and stories. Tagore told an English friend five years ago that he had seven more years to live, and that he would die at 68, this being written in his horoscope.

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18 November, 1926

**THE TIMES**

p13c7(D)

**Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore arrived yesterday in Sofia, where he had an audience of King Boris, and gave a lecture on contemporary civilization, which was very well attended, as his works are much read in Bulgaria.

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18 November, 1926

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p815(W)

**A STUDY OF TAGORE**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE: Poet and Dramatist.**  
By EDWARD THOMPSON. (Oxford: University Press, London: Milford. 10s. 6d. net.)

It is Mr. Thompson's chief aim, in this generous and judicious study, to acquaint his readers with the substance and significance of the whole of

Tagore's literary output, and to place it in relation not only to its literary antecedents in East and West, but also to its author's non-literary activities both as an educationist and as a recognized leader of thought and civilization in his native land. His task has been extremely difficult and for several reasons. The first is that Tagore is not, as his earliest readers in this country fondly imagined, a fastidious and eclectic artist who distils the hard-won experience of five ascetic years into one lyric; he is, on the contrary, a writer of amazing fecundity, who, when he edits a magazine, writes all but the whole of it himself, and from whom plays and songs, with their accompaniment of music and dancing, flow as freely as articles, essays and reviews. The next is that Mr. Thompson wishes to write in such a way as to satisfy Indian and English readers at once, and, to do this, is obliged to ask them all to assume a sort of Anglo-Indian consciousness for which, it is to be feared, few will know where to find the ingredients. We ourselves, approaching his work inevitably from the English standpoint, are a little disturbed by his demands on our knowledge not so much of Bengali literature as of the conditions of criticism, the way in which literature is received in Bengal; and we are also continually perplexed and non-plussed by comparisons and allusions which suggest that the Bengali reader, when he reads English, compares his poets with ours and consciously or unconsciously assesses their value by an English standard. Already, in the third paragraph of Mr. Thompson's preface, we are told that Milton's verses numbered less than 18,000 while Tagore's have already exceeded 100,000. Tagore, we learn later, has never studied Milton or cared for him; but the names of the two poets are so frequently coupled by Mr. Thompson that we can only infer Tagore to be, for a certain coterie, the "Milton of Bengal".

Whether such comparisons are valuable or fruitful we gravely doubt. The charm of Tagore's poems for their English readers has lain in his serene command of the medium of rhythmical prose in which he presented them, and in the religious serenity of the mind which they revealed. With this, they had the singular attraction which began to lose its power when, with the appearance of numerous volumes, it was perceived that their differ-

ence from other works was only less remarkable than their resemblance to one another. This monotony was the more prejudicial to them because of the tone of exalted spirituality in which they were cast. No taste is less exacting of change than English taste. Cabbage and boiled potatoes are acceptable provender to us at every season of the year: the same jests delight us in our music-halls from generation to generation. But the enjoyment of high poetry can never be automatic; for it demands our most concentrated attention, and the more we concentrate our attention, the more we discriminate in what is offered to it. As soon, therefore, as Tagore was found to be constantly presenting the same ideas in different, or not so very different, garments, we concluded that when he seemed high above us it was perhaps merely that he was very far away. If he is to be brought nearer, as we hope he may be - Mr. Thompson's study makes it clear that his reputation in this country is now as much below as it was once above his genuine merits - it will not, we think, be by inviting English readers to acquaint themselves with the bulk of his work, but by enabling them to relate the best of it to its background of experience and showing them wherein its quality consists.

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19 November, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**  
p10c5(D)

### **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN BULGARIA**

A Special delegation composed of Bulgarian writers, literary men and journalists went to meet Sir Rabindranath Tagore at Zaribrod (a town in Jogo-Slav territory), and when he arrived at Sofia (says Reuter) he was warmly greeted by a large crowd in which students predominated. The crowd cheered wildly as the carriage, which was a veritable garden of flowers, proceeded with difficulty to the hotel. Sir Rabindranath delivered the same lecture on "Contemporary Art" as he delivered at Belgrade. He was to leave on Wednesday morning for Bucharest.

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20 November, 1926

**THE INQUIRER**  
p736(W)

DR. TAGORE has recently visited Germany, where he gave lectures and readings from his poems in many of the important cities. His books are very popular in Germany and he has had large audiences. Dr. Tagore is now in Hungary, and will sail for India in December.

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20 November, 1926

**THE NATION AND THE ATHENAEUM**  
p271(W)

### **Section: THE WORLD OF BOOKS**

These two books gave me a desire to get the taste of the lives of more ordinary men into my mouth. I had to read no fewer than four books before I found my mental digestion restored. They were "Demosthenes," by Georges Clemenceau (Hodder & Stoughton, 10s. 6d.); "Rabindranath Tagore," by E. J. Thompson (Oxford University Press, 10s. 6d.); "Havelock Ellis," by Isaac Goldberg (Constable, 18s.); and "Skin for Skin," by Llewelyn Powys (Cape, 9s.). What a difference in a library dish is made by a few drops of intelligence and a pinch of salt of reality! Mr. Clemenceau writes about a Greek orator, dead two thousand years ago, and his view of Demosthenes's career, in some important points, is open to criticism. But here we get good hard facts; men themselves, not smiles and uniforms; and plenty of salt. The result is that Demosthenes and Philip and Aeschines and that fat-faced Isocrates are alive and Mr. Georges Clemenceau is alive and his book is alive - and we ourselves are more alive when we turn the last page and open the first of Mr. E. J. Thompson. Mr. Thompson has written a serious book about Tagore, which requires serious reading. It is a life of the poet and a detailed criticism of his works. Mr. Thompson has wisely illustrated his criticism by frequent and lengthy quotations from Tagore's works. The reader has, in this way, a complete apparatus for studying Tagore's life, views, and artistic achieve-

ment. In my own case, the effect, I must admit, is unfortunate. I have never been able to see anything in Tagore's poetry, and this complete survey of it leaves me still blind and deaf to any merit which it may possess. There is not a single quotation in this book which does not seem to me second-rate and rather tiresome. But that may be due to prejudice or blindness, and at any rate the book is stiff reading, and still further restored my appetite, and I turned to "Havelock Ellis" with alacrity. It is somewhat disappointing. Mr. Goldberg is an American, and not a good biographer. He had a great opportunity, but he has half muddled it away. He could not do so altogether, because Mr. Havelock Ellis is such an interesting character and such a remarkable writer that no biography of him could be dull. The book also contains some unpublished poems, notes, &c.

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22 November, 1926

**THE TIMES**

p13c7(D)

**Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Bucharest from Sofia on Friday for a visit of two days.

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25 November, 1926

**THE BRITISH WEEKLY**

p235(W)

**ARMISTICE DAY IN YUGOSLAVIA**

With all due reverence and quiet dignity Armistice Day was celebrated in Belgrade, the capital of the new kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes - more tersely known as Yugoslavia. The service, which was conducted by Mr. P. H. Sitters, O.B.E., in the new Y.M.C.A. Hall in Belgrade, was attended by H.B.M. Minister to the Court of King Alexander, and by practically the

whole of the British colony. Bishop Nicolai, of Ochrida, the rev. Dr. Velimirovitch, who preached in St. Paul's Cathedral during the war, led the meditations of the congregation up to the two minutes' silence, and he afterwards explained in delightfully picturesque and graphic English how irreligion, greed and sloth were subtle underlying causes of strife amid the nations. Bishop Nicolai is the author of a well-known book in English called "The Agony of the Church", and he is an Honorary Foreign Governor of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was also represented by Mr. J. W. Wiles, M.A., of Christ's College, Cambridge, the society's secretary for South-Eastern Europe. On Monday and Tuesday, November 15 and 16, the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore lectured in the large hall of the university to an audience of over three thousand. The poet spoke in English and was interpreted into Serbian with great literacy skill by Mr. Alexander Vidakovic, a Serbian graduate of Oxford University.

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J.W.W.

26 November, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p11c6(D)

**SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN ATHENS**

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT)

**ATHENS, THURSDAY**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore arrived here this morning, and leaves for India, by Alexandria, this evening. On his arrival he was warmly received by literary and dramatic coteries of the capital, who entertained him to luncheon. The Government has made him a Commander of the Order of the Redeemer. During the morning the poet visited the Acropolis, which he regarded with interest, but without expressing any admirations.

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26 November, 1926

**THE TIMES**

p11c7(D)

**Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived in Alexandria from Athens, and he will give lectures both in Cairo and Alexandria.

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16 December, 1926

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p9c4(D)

**THE POETRY OF TAGORE**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE,  
POET AND DRAMATIST**

By Edward Thompson. Oxford: The University press. Pp. xii. 327. 10s. 6d. net.

Few poets have ever enjoyed in their lifetime such a world-wide reputation as is Tagore's. Yet his reputation in the West is founded on but a fraction of his work. Abundance - is of the essence of his genius. European readers have been apt to think of him only as a singer of mystical ecstasies and a writer of symbolic dramas. But he is much more than this, and Mr. Thompson has done a good service in writing this book with its full account of Tagore's many-sided activity. It must have been a difficult book to write. Merely to read the whole of the poet's prodigious production in Bengali was no light task, and to deal with it in detail, sift and criticise, needed great skill in presentment. Mr. Thompson says he has excised much; he would perhaps have done better to excise still more, concentrating on what he conceives to be Tagore's real successes, for the effect of the whole, with its analysis of such a multiplicity of volumes and its alternations of praise and blame, is a little lacking in firmness of outline. But it is a valuable record, and Mr. Thompson's criticisms are shrewd and sane. He is anything but an indiscriminate enthusiast; he condemns Tagore's faults - his

over-facility in rhetoric and ornament, his repetitions of himself - without compromise; nevertheless he retains his enthusiasm for his great qualities. Though he finds that there is much that is empty, and even false, in the poet's work, he maintains that "there is an enormous body of beautiful work by Rabindranath, probably a larger body of really beautiful work than any other poet can show". Yet it is only very rarely that it "rises into the extremely small class of first-rate poetry". Only those who, like Mr. Thompson, have Bengali can dispute or confirm these conclusions to any purpose. There are many pages of translation in this volume, both into verse and prose; but if the images "come through" and though too often prettily decorative some of these are such as only a great poet could conceive - the magic of melody and the intimate felicities inevitably escape. What Mr. Thompson does effectually bring out is Tagore's range. We know him in the mystic vein which belongs to his later work, but we have not realised his playfulness, his fierce satire and indignation, the elements in his verse which correspond to the courageous and independent part played by the poet in his own country. A valuable part of Mr. Thompson's book is the chapter on Bengali poetry and Tagore's predecessors.

L.B.

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20 December, 1926

**THE TIMES**

p11c7(D)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has arrived in Madras on his return from Europe.

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21 December, 1926

**THE TIMES**

p11c7(D)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore's return to Calcutta from his World tour was the occasion of a great reception at Howrah Station yesterday.

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**Exchange.**

1927

12 February, 1927

**THE NEW STATESMAN**

p544(W)

## **TAGORE**

**Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist. By EDWARD THOMPSON. Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d.**

Six years ago Dr. Thompson published a short Life of Rabindranath Tagore, which was the first biographical sketch written by a European with a knowledge of the whole body of the poet's work in Bengali. This later book is not an expansion of the first, but a wholly independent piece of work, accepted by the University of London as a doctorate thesis, although not written with that purpose in mind. Let it be said at once that it is a valuable and satisfying study, offering the only basis available to the Western reader for a general estimate of Tagore as a man of letters and an intellectual influence.

It is, of course, a remarkable career and a remarkable influence here recorded. Tagore is the one modern Oriental writer who has conquered a world audience. But, although the list of his books in English contains nearly fifty titles, his reputation in Europe and America rests upon a small part only of his work, and Dr. Thompson has earned our particular thanks by bringing out the wide extent and variety of the territory, which no translator has so far entered. The profusion of Tagore's creative gift is truly remarkable. He has been publishing since his teens – that is, for close upon half-a-century. He has adventured in all forms of verse, has written in prose upon nearly every subject, and been actively engaged in one social movement after another. He has experienced brief periods of relative unfruitfulness, but as a rule his production has gone forward in a copious and effortless stream – so effortlessly indeed as occasionally to suggest doubts of its profundity and real value. He seems almost too articulate.

At times Tagore's ideas and public actions have made him the object of ferocious attacks from his fellow-countrymen; at times his intellectual mod-

ernism has provoked alike the conservative and the revolutionary elements in Bengal. But he has gone straight forward on his own lines, with a courage and self-assurance that few contemporaries have surpassed, and has ridden out every storm.

His writing would appear to rest upon almost all levels of quality. His novels have been important as social criticism than as romance. His plays, though occasionally performed in the west, have no place on the Bengal stage. His essays, written almost without cessation during his long literary life, have entered into the social culture of Bengal. His songs are a common possession of the people in north-eastern India. He has written nearly 1,500 of them, and they are endlessly popular. In two months, as recently as 1922, he wrote fifty songs.

Dr. Thompson has interesting things to say about Tagore's relation to Western thought and to Christianity, the limits of his knowledge of English poetry and its influence upon him, the lateness of development on certain sides, the growth of his fame outside India. Throughout the book he translates freely, both rhymed and unrhymed verse. The renderings are obviously competent, and sometimes the verse is strikingly good. But, needless to say, Dr. Thompson has a very difficult task in proving the greatness of a poet who has written originally in an Indian language known only to a very small number of Europeans, and it must remain true that the claim made on behalf of Tagore to a place among the world's leading poets can be taken only on trust. As to the largeness of his endowment, the fineness of his lyric power, and the impressiveness of his personality, there can be no doubts.

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3 March, 1927

**THE DUBLIN EVENING HERALD**

p4c5(DE)

## **SCANDALISING THE EAST**

Rabindranath Tagore, India's poet laureate, has declared that the depicting of night life, domestic relations, crime and undignified scenes in American films, in Western films, released throughout Asia and Africa are "a libel on Western civilisation",

and that the exaggerated scenes of Asiatic life presented to Western audiences seem to him to be equally bad. That these misrepresentations of Western life lead to a political as well as to a social depreciation of the white man in the eyes of Orientals is the reason for a protest addressed to the American Government against certain examples of American producers. The protest is the result of agitation by British administrators in India and others who have an intimate knowledge of India and its peoples.

15 April, 1927

**THE GLASGOW HERALD**

p7c3(D)

#### Section: LITERATURE

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

#### India's Great Singer

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE: Poet and Dramatist.**  
By E. J. Thompson. 10s. 6d. (Oxford: Clarendon press.)

Although he writes in a rather flowery way, and at too great a length, Mr. Thompson (who is Lecturer in Bengali at Oxford) gives us a picture of the manifold activities of the great Bengali poet as writer, politician, lecturer and schoolmaster that ought to dispel any notion that the author of "Gitanjali" is one of Arnold's ineffective angels, and that should reinstate the poet in his rightful place as a great world-figure. Known to Western readers almost solely by the religious poems in "Gitanjali" and by the philosophical essays on "Nationalism" and "Creative Unity", Tagore has been placed with Yeats and A. E. as the Indian equivalent of the Celtic mystic spirit; but that is not the complete Tagore. An interest in modern science and politics has been one of the strongest strands in his life, and in its translations and comments upon hitherto untranslatable philosophic and satirical poems would make it commendable. In poems like "Creation, Conservation and Destruction" Tagore weaves into a unity the myth of Brahma, Vishnu, Lakshmi and Siva with

the cosmic conceptions of modern astronomy; and in the poem "Ahalya" an idea of modern science that rocks may have a sort of consciousness - is used as the basis of the theme. These distinctly modern poems were mostly written some time prior to the "Gitanjali" period, and they have a vigour and variety of diction that the poems of the latter period do not possess. We find lines like this in the early poems -

"The lightning rips the clouds, it peeps and  
peers,  
Hurling through empty space its crooked  
spears  
Of sharpened laughter".

Mr. Thompson on various pages shows that he is sensitive to the spiritual impetus behind Tagore's poetry - the force that makes the poet conceive of every particular creation of nature and man as being contained in the Divine; but he does not trace with sufficient clarity the evolution of this poetic vision of life from small beginnings in the poet's early work to its perfect enunciation in the religious lyrics of the poet's maturity, of which typical instances are -

"In this silent incantation of the steadfast  
stars  
I salute Thee",

and

"Wonder are Thy herds of sun and stars,  
Thy cows of Light,  
There Thou dost sit, playing thy flute,  
Pasturing them in the vast sky"

On Tagore's dealings in Indian politics and education Mr. Thompson may be taken as a safe guide. The former may be of fleeting influence and interest, but the latter bids fair to be a permanent influence in the East, now that the unique school at Santiniketan has been raised to the status of a University. A knowledge of this side of Tagore's life adds considerably to our understanding of modern Indian problems. But in the long run it is the poet that interests us the poet of the songs especially. Mr. Yeats has said of these songs in his

preface to "Gitanjali" - As the generations pass, travellers will hum them on the highway and men rowing upon rivers". Let us hope that the great Indian people will never become so Westernised as to forgo the heritage of great song that Tagore has given it and adopt in its place the raucous music-hall ditties of Europe and America.

25 April, 1927

### THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

p5c5(DE)

### SHAKESPEARE BANNED

Berlin, Saturday

It is announced that the Lithuanian Government has issued a decree forbidding the sale in Lithuania of the works of Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Sir Rabindranath Tagore. The reason given for this step is that the works in question are immoral and anti-social.

Central News.

10 August, 1927

### THE TIMES

p9c7(D)

### Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF

Sir Rabindranath Tagore who is at present at Singapore *en route* for the Far East, has accepted an invitation to deliver the Hibbert lectures in England in 1928.

13 August, 1927

### THE TIMES

p11c7(D)

### Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, who has been spending some days in Salzburg with his wife

and daughter, on Saturday attended a performance of Schiller's *Rauber* at the festival plays in that city.

16 August, 1927

### THE TIMES

p9c7(D)

### Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was not, as was stated on Monday, at Salzburg on Saturday last. Ill-health prevented him from coming to Europe this year, and he is still in India.

14 October, 1927

### THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY

p289(W)

### "MOTHER INDIA"

Letter from Rabindranath Tagore.

*The following letter is from the pages of the "Manchester Guardian":*

Sir, - May I appeal to your sense of justice and claim a place in your paper for this letter of mine which I am compelled to write in vindication of my position as a representative of India against a most unjustifiable attack?

While travelling in this island of Bali I have just chanced upon a copy of the *New Statesman* of the 16th July containing the review of a book of India written by a tourist from America. The reviewer, while supporting with an unctuous virulence all the calumnies heaped upon our people by the authoress, and while calling repeated attention to the common Hindu vice of untruthfulness even amongst the greatest of us, has made public a malicious piece of fabrication, not as one of the specimens picked up from a show-case of wholesale abuse displayed in this or some other book, but as a gratuitous information about the truth of which the writer tacitly insinuates his own personal testimony. It runs as thus: "The poet Sir Rabindranath Tagore expresses in print his conviction that marriage should

be consummated before puberty in order to avert the vagaries of female sexual desire".

We have become painfully familiar with deliberate circulation of hideous lies in the West against enemy countries, but a similar propaganda against individuals, whose countrymen have obviously offended the writer by their political aspirations, has come to me as a surprise. If the people of the United States had ever made themselves politically obnoxious to England, it is imaginable how an English writer of this type would take a gloating delight in proving, with profuse helps from the news columns in the American journals, their criminal propensity and quote for his support their constant indulgence in vicarious enjoyment of crimes through cinema pictures. But would he, in the fiercest frenzy of his rhetoric running amok, dare make the monstrous accusation, let us say, against the late president Wilson for ever having expressed his pious conviction that the lynching of the Negroes was a mere necessity in superior civilisation for cultivating Christian virtues? Or would he venture to ascribe Professor Dewey the theory that centuries of witch-burning have developed in the Western peoples the quick moral sensitiveness that helps them in judging and condemning others whom they do not know or understand or like and about whose culpability they are never in lack of conclusive evidence? But has it been made so easily possible in my case, such a deliberately untruthful irresponsibility in this writer, condoned by the editor, by the fact that the victim was no better than a British subject who by accident of his birth has happened to be a Hindu and not belonging to the Muslim community, which, according to the writer, is specially favoured by this people and our government?

May I point out in this connection that selected documents of facts, generalised into an unqualified statement affecting a whole large population, may become in the hands of the tourist from across the sea a poison-tipped arrow of the most heinous form of untruth to which the British nation itself may afford a broadly easy target! It is a cunning lie against a community which the writer has used when he describes the Hindus as cow-dung eaters. It is just as outrageous as to introduce Englishmen to those who know them imperfectly as addicted to the cocaine habit because cocaine is commonly used in their dentistry. In Hindu India only in rare cases

as exceedingly small quantity of cow-dung is used not as an ingredient in their meals but as a part of the performance of expiatory rites for some violation of social convention. One who has no special interest or pleasure in creating ill-feeling towards the European will, if he is honest, hesitate in describing them, though seemingly with a greater justice than in the other case, as eaters of live creatures or of rotten food, mentioning oyster and cheese for illustration. It is the subtlest method of falsehood, this placing of exaggerated emphasis upon insignificant details, giving to the exception the appearance of the rule.

The instances of moral perversity when observed in alien surroundings naturally loom large to us, because the positive power of sanitation which works from within and the counteracting forces that keep up social balance are not evident to a stranger, especially to one who has the craving for an intemperate luxury of moral indignation which very often is the sign of the same morbid pathology seen from behind. When such a critic comes to the East not for truth but for the chuckling enjoyment of an exaggerated self-complacency and when he underlines some social aberrations with his exultant red pencil glaringly emphasising them out of their context, he goads our own young critics to play the identical unholy game. They also, with the help of the numerous guide books supplied by unimpeachable agency for the good of humanity, explore the dark recesses of Western society, the breeding grounds of nauseous habits and moral filthiness some of which have a dangerous cover of a respectable exterior; they also select their choice specimens of rottenness with the same pious zeal and sanctimonious pleasure as their foreign models have in bemearing the name of a whole nation with the mud from ditches that may represent an undoubted fact yet not the complete truth.

And thus is generated the endless vicious circle of mutual recrimination and ever-accumulating misunderstandings that are perilous for the peace of the world. Of course our young critic in the East is under a disadvantage. For the Western peoples have an enormously magnifying organ of a sound that goes deep and reaches far, either when they malign others or defend themselves against accusations which touch them to the quick; whereas our own mortified

critic struggles with his unaided lungs that can whisper and sigh but not shout. But is it not known that our inarticulate emotions become highly inflammable when crowded in the underground cellars of our mind, dark silent? The whole of the eastern continent is daily being helped in the storage of such explosives by the critics of the West who with a delicious sense of duty done are ever ready to give vent to their blind prejudices while tenderly nourishing a comfortable conscience that lulls them into forgetting that they also have their Western analogies in moral license only in different grabs made in their fashionable establishments or in their slums. However, let me strongly assure my English and other Western readers, that neither I nor my indignant Indian friends whom I have with me have ever had the least shadow of intimation of what has been described in this book and quoted with a grin of conviction by this writer as the usual practice in the training of sexual extravagance. I hope such Western readers will understand my difficulty in giving an absolute denial to certain facts alleged, when they remember the occasional startling disclosures in their own society in Europe and America, allowing to the unsuspecting public a sudden glimpse of systematic orgies of sexual abnormality in an en-

vironment which is supposed not to represent "sub-human" civilisation.

The writer in the *New Statesman* has suggested for the good of the world that the people in India condemned by the tourist for malpractice should never be assisted by the benevolent British soldiers safely to preserve their existence and continue their race. He evidently chooses to ignore the fact that these people have maintained their life and culture without the help of the British soldiers for a longer series of centuries than his own people has. However that may be, I shrink from borrowing my wisdom from this source and make a similarly annihilating suggestion for his kind of writers who spread about the malignant contagion of race-hatred; because in spite of provocations we should have a patient faith in human nature for its unlimited capacity for improvement: and let us hope to be rid of the lurking persistence of barbarism in Man, not through elimination of the noxious elements by physical destruction, but through the education of mind and a discipline of true culture — Yours, &c.,

**Rabindranath Tagore.**

*Moendook, Bali, September 6.*

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1928

17 August, 1928

**THE TIMES**

p11c6(D)

According to the Soviet journal *Pravda*, invitations to the centenary celebrations of Tolstoy's birthday will be issued by the Soviet and prominent men of letters. Among those mentioned are Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and Mr. Gandhi.

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29 November, 1928

**THE TIMES**

p19c4(D)

### **INDIAN NATIONALISM.**

#### **DR. R. TAGORE'S CRITICISM.**

The communalism now so announced a feature of Indian life has evoked from Dr. Rabindranath Tagore a frank criticism of the Nationalist cult in India as expounded by its present-day advocates.

In an article published by the *Fauji Akbar*, the journal for Indian soldiers, dated November 3, the poet declares that the real problem in India is not political, but social. Nationalism has for years been at the bottom of India's troubles. She has never had a real sense of nationalism, being too vast in area and too diverse in races. She has laid all her emphasis on the law of heredity, ignoring the law of mutation. "Political freedom," he writes, "will not give us freedom when our mind is not free."

"When we talk of Western nationality we forget that the nations there do not have that physical repulsion one for the other that we have between different castes. The social habit of mind which impels us to make the life of our fellow-beings a burden to them where they differ from us, even in

such a thing as their choice of food, is sure to persist in our political organization. How, then can we think that our task is to build a political miracle of freedom upon the quicksand of social slavery?"

"The educated community of India has become insensible to her social needs. They are taking the very immobility of our social structures as the sign of their perfection. Therefore, they think that all their energies need their only scope in the political field. It is like a man whose legs have become shrivelled and useless trying to delude himself that these limbs have grown still because they have attained their ultimate perfection. We must recognize that it is providential that the West has come to India. It would be mischievous if the gifts we wish for were granted to us at once."

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20 December, 1928

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p7c3(D)

#### **Section: BOOKS OF THE DAY**

THE "VISVA-BHARATI" - The October number of Tagore's quarterly appeals to all those who are concerned to bring the East and West closer together. There is another of Dr. Tagore's letter from Java where he has been studying the modern Japanese culture, a most interesting offshoot from early Hinduism which has developed an appreciation for aesthetic values, while India reserves her homage for the ascetic. Three articles, two by Indians and one by a European, endeavour to bring the philosophic and religious thought of the ancient East to bear upon the spiritual agony of the modern world. Mr. C. F. Andrews has an article explaining that very Western saint John Wesley to the East. Lastly, in the quarterly notes the poet himself once again pleads with his countrymen to distinguish between the power of science and the abuse of that power by greed.

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***Period 1929-1935***

**Expression as a Painter  
Hibbert lectures  
Russian tour**



1929

6 February, 1929

**THE TIMES**

p12c3(D)

**SIR R. TAGORE'S POEMS**

**ACTION FOR INFRINGEMENT  
OF COPYRIGHT**

**(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)**

**ALLAHABAD, FE. 5.**

Messrs. Macmillan and Co. have filed in the District Judge's Court in Allahabad a suit on behalf of Sir Rabindranath Tagore against the Educational Book Depot in Allahabad and the local printer, alleging infringement of copyright of "Champa Flower" and of three other poems. The defendants reproduced these in a collection of verse which the Board of Intermediate and High School Education of the United Provinces set for one of their examinations.

The defendants pledged that they judged from other publications that either there was no copyright of the disputed poems or that in the interests of poor students and of education Sir R. Tagore had tacitly acquiesced in their publication. Four poems were taken from different volumes of Sir R. Tagore's works, and the defendants claimed privilege under the Indian Copyright Act, which permits the reproduction of not more than two passages from a literary work in any book intended for the use of students.

The Judge fixed March 23 for the final hearing.

Messrs. Macmillans also filed a suit against the same defendants for an alleged infringement of copyright of the late Professor Alfred Marshall's "Principles of Economics," the proceedings being taken on behalf of Mrs. Marshall. The same defendants were concerned in the case of Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."

22 March, 1929

**THE TIMES**

p15c3(D)

**INDIA AND CANADA  
EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE  
AT VANCOUVER**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore is visiting Canada in response to an invitation to represent British India at the fourth triennial National Conference on Education, to be held at Vancouver from April 5 to 13. To-day Professor Rushbrook Williams, will embark in the Duchess of York at Southampton to represent at the Conference the Ruling Princes of India, on the nomination of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes.

The initiative in this new departure was taken by the executive of the National Council of Education, Canada, whose secretary, Major Fred Ney, inquired of the Viceroy if the Princes could be represented, and was informed in reply that they would be happy to send a delegate. Mr. Rushbrook Williams will be back in London at the end of April.

Mr. Aubrey Symonds, who is representing the Board of Education, will also sail on board the Duchess of York. The general topic of the Conference is to be education and leisure. A day will be devoted to each of the following subjects:- Literature, the cinema, music and drama, broadcasting, organized play, recreation and hobbies, and health in relation to leisure.

6 April, 1929

**THE TIMES**

p9c4(D)

**EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE  
AT VANCOUVER  
NINE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED  
(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT)**

**VANCOUVER, APRIL 5**

The fourth triennial National Conference on Education opened at Victoria this morning, the Governor-General, Lord Willingdon, welcoming delegates included Sir Rabindranath Tagore (India), Sir Aubrey Symonds (Secretary to the Board

of Education, Great Britain), Sir Charles Robertson (University of Birmingham), Sir Archibald Strong (Australia), Dr. Bruno Roselli (Italy), Comte Fleury (France), Dr. Mosbach (Germany), and Professor Matousek (Czechoslovakia).

The Agenda covers a 10-day conference at Vancouver beginning on Monday Next with a debate on education and leisure. Discussions will follow on the influence exerted by literature, the cinema, music, the drama, wireless and organized recreation on contemporary education especially in relation to Canada.

24 April, 1929

### THE EVENING NEWS

p8c2(D)

#### Section: OCCASIONAL NOTES

That Indian poet whose name sounds like an exercise in lispng, Rabindranath Tagore, declined to land at San Francisco because the officials asked him the harmless routine questions as to whether he could read and write. He might have had the best of the joke by replying that he could write but could not read. But Rabindranath sulked instead, thus supporting people who say that to be rich in poetry you must be destitute in humour.

29 April, 1929

### THE TIMES

p13c2(D)

#### SIR R. TAGORE'S POEMS ALLAHABAD COPYRIGHT ACTION. (FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

ALLAHABAD, APRIL 28.

Counsel's arguments have been concluded in the action brought by Messrs. Macmillan and Co. on behalf of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, against the proprietor of the Educational Book Depot at Allahabad and his printer, for alleged infringement of copyright by the publication of certain of Sir R. Tagore's works in a collection of poems.

Counsel for the plaintiff said that the defence appeared to be that such stealing had become customary. This was no defence, he added. The defendants' book could not be regarded as *bona fide* publication for the use of students, as it was not prescribed by the education Board. The reproduction of the poems by

the defendants had greatly affected the sale of the book "Poems from Tagore," which was prescribed by the Education Board. Counsel for the defence said that no action had been taken until this year, although the poems were first reproduced in 1925, and it should therefore be considered that the plaintiff had made the defendants believe that he would not object to the reproduction of his poems in the interests of students.

The district Judge of Allahabad, who is hearing the case, reserved judgment pending the reply of plaintiffs counsel regarding alleged defects in the power of attorney under which Sir Rabindranath Tagore had authorised Messrs. Macmillan's manager to take proceedings.

3 June, 1929

### THE TIMES

p15c2(D)

#### INDIAN COPYRIGHT CASE (FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT)

ALLAHABAD, JUNE 2

The district judge in Allahabad was found the educational Book depot and the printer to the National Press of Allahabad guilty of infringing the copyright of Sir Rabindranath Tagore in certain poems by reproducing them in a book - "Intermediate Poems for Detailed Study, 1925" - and has restrained the defendants from publishing or selling any book containing these poems and ordering delivery to the Court of any book published by the defendants containing the poems. The defendants were also ordered to pay the plaintiff 400 rupees (£30) damages and his costs.

30 December, 1929

### THE TIMES

p8c4(D)

#### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S FILM

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has written the scenario for a film to be made at his residence, Santi Niketan, Bolpur, Bengal. He will play the leading part in this film version of his latest drama, entitled *Tapati*. It will be produced by British Dominion films Limited, and will be ready early in the New Year.

**1930**

*14 March, 1930*

**THE BIRMINGHAM POST**

p15c1(D)

**Section: LONDON LETTERS FOR WOMEN**

### **Conditions In India**

The current issue of "The International women's News" has a good descriptive article written by an Englishman who had toured from Lahore to Colombo lecturing to educated Indian audiences of eleven different religions. His generalisations upon the status of the Indian peasant classes and the conditions under which the women and children live make sad reading, and much of what he says is in corroboration of Miss Mayo's much-discussed book. Although the Government has sanctioned the remarriage of widows, only about 300 have taken advantage of the new conditions, probably owing to religious or social scruple. But the writer describes some delightful experiences while lecturing to some women's colleges, and mentions Rabindranath Tagore's co-educational college at Santiniketan where "there was a crowd of girls as free and bright as girls at Newnham, having the life they deserved, many beautiful and some remarkably so." There is, apparently, a small class in India of entirely emancipated ladies, and the writers recalls a dinner with the Moslem finance Minister at Hyderabad, at which the hostess took her place at the head of the table, after the European fashion. Young women Parseoan are emancipated and well educated, as are the ladies of Bhopal, the Moslem State so long ruled by the marvellous old figure of the Begum.

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*27 March, 1930*

**THE TIMES**

p13c7(D)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore arrived at MARSEILLES yesterday from India. After a stay at Cape Martin and visits to Italy and Paris he will go on to London.

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*19 May, 1930*

**OXFORD MAIL**

p4c6-7 (DE)

**Section : Oxford Diary**

### **Tagore's Visit**

THE famous Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, delivered to-day the first of his Hibbert lectures at Manchester College, Oxford, on "The Religion of Man."

Tagore accepted the invitation of Dr. Jacks to be this year's Hibbert lecturer sometimes ago, but the visit was postponed owing to the poet's illness. From this he has now, happily, completely recovered.

There will be three lectures, and, in addition Tagore will preach in Manchester College Chapel on Sunday week.

During the last few days he has been staying at the Woodbroke Settlement of the Society of Friends near Birmingham.

### **In Paris**

Tagore has many friends in Paris, and a few days ago he was entertained to a luncheon at which numerous literary celebrities were present.

It happened to be his 69th birthday.

He gave a short address in English, "in a sweet low voice," says a Paris commentator, "which has all the freshness of youth."

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*20 May, 1930*

**OXFORD MAIL**

p3c4 and also p4c6 (DE)

## **THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION**

### **Rabindranath Tagore's Oxford Lecture**

"Life story of evolution must always find further obstacles to conquest in order to carry on the adventure," said Sir Rabindranath Tagore, delivering the first Hibbert lectures for 1930 in the Arlosh Hall, Oxford, yesterday. "A satisfactory conclusion would mean the end of all things."

Speaking on the subject on "The Religion of Man," Mr. Tagore referred to the evolution of life on earth and its culmination is mankind. In the beginning, he said, there was a vast desert, "the thrones of the gigantic inert," which knew nothing and could not realise itself.

Life, emerging first upon the earth as a simple cell, by its power of adaptation showed itself superior to mere size, it showed the value, not the mere volume of existence.

By the binding together of numerous cells, a larger unit was created, which was more than a mere aggregation possessing qualities of its own. Nature, however, still attempted the solution in huge bulks of bone and muscle, in the aim of safety and increased power. Animals became vulnerable through mere size. The natural rhythms of life were broken.

### Subtle Perfection

The appearance of man turned the course of evolution from physical aggrandisement to a subtler perfection. Man's mind became the sovereign of his body and of matter; he was no longer a mere tool of instinct.

The evolution of his limbs was carried on outside his body in the machinery which he invented. It was not necessary for him to spend 1,000,000 years evolving a telescope as a part of his body, nor to carry it with him permanently.

As a result, his progress became unlimited, even though at times the evolution of these external limbs was rapid to allow his mind to adapt itself immediately to their use.

Just as, from a multiple of cells a new unity was formed in the shape of the animal body, so from the relationship of men's minds was born an immortal and single humanity, in the ideal of which they realised the eternal. Of this unity the consciousness was spiritual, and man's effort to be true to it was religion.

[from p4c6]

### Section: Oxford Diary

By filling up the gangways with chairs and allowing the audience to appropriate the major part of

the platform, the Manchester College authorities enabled a very large audience to hear Dr. Tagore's first lecture in the Arlosh Hall yesterday afternoon.

As might have been expected, Indian undergraduates were a conspicuous element in the crowd.

As the lecturer, with Dr. Jacks, entered the hall from behind the platform, the venerable figure - the mass of white hair and sweeping beard, the dark, deep-shunken shining eyes, the black robe with white facings - drew the whole audience, with an irresistible magnetic force, to its feet.

But there was no applause, and Dr. Tagore remained absolutely impassive before the silent tribute.

### An Eastern Seer

As he sat down in the carved, scarlet-leather chair, he looked the Eastern seer of pictorial tradition.

One felt that there was no touch of exaggeration in Dr. Jackson's hailing of him as "a poet, dreamer and prophet who had blotted the distance between East and West.

### Eloquence and Whimsicality

Dr. Tagore spoke for about an hour. His English is most fluent, his modulation of his voice singularly beautiful in its flawless rise and fall.

In the whole lecture he had only stumbled once - and that was over the word hippopotamus!

What perhaps surprised the audience was the Western whimsicality and selfishness of spirit which Dr. Tagore imposed on his own philosophy.

The crowded hall contained members of almost every christian denomination in Oxford. Many Indians had come up to Oxford from London specially for the occasion.

20 May, 1930

THE TIMES

p18c3(D)

### DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON RELIGION

The Indian poet, DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE, gave the first of his Hibbert lectures on

"The Religion of Man" at the Arlosh Hall, Manchester College, Oxford, last night. In the course of it he said that in the ideal of humanity man realized the eternal in his life and the boundless in his love. The consciousness of this unity was spiritual, and man's effort to be true to it was his religion. The spirit of love, which dwelt in the heart of humanity, emancipated the consciousness of the individual man from the illusory bond of the separateness of the individual self, bringing it into a new world of human unity and fellowship. This spirit was the only bond of unity which could lead us to the final truth of the universe.

22 May, 1930

### OXFORD MAIL

p3c5(DE)

### MAN - THE ETERNAL REBEL Sir Rabindranath Tagore in Oxford

"I dare not to claim to be a philosopher, even with the precarious help of misinformation," said Sir Rabindranath Tagore in the second of his Hibbert Lectures on "The Religion of Man" to a crowded audience at Manchester College, Oxford yesterday.

"The food I have taken, the dress I wear, the house in which I live, represent a tremendous knowledge of practice and organisation which I probably lack.

"Now if a blackbird did not know how to collect its food, and build its nest, but specialised in singing, its fellows would certainly allow it to perish.

"This is evidence of the difference between man and the beasts."

### Carried from the Physical

"The truth of the ideal is much more real to us than the truth of the material world, or of the isolated self. It is reached through freedom, which carries us from the realm of the physical to the realm of value.

"Men's upright position is a symbol. He asserted his freedom against the established rule of nature at the beginning of evolution. He has insisted on

carrying amendments to any evolution proposed by providences.

"Man's hands have been emancipated, and of all his limbs they have attained the highest dignity. The will which creates in them its best vehicle.

### Past Civilisations

"Freedom is for expressing the infinite. This implies a history of constant regenerations, a series of fresh beginnings. Man has a responsibility to outlive his life, to create himself and his surroundings, making them worthy of eternity.

"Past civilisations are like several mountain peaks, with different altitudes and different temperatures, but all belonging to the same chain. So, too, we all belong to one unity, from which our great-souled men have direct inspiration.

"Man is not happy or contented as the animals are. His happiness depends on the truth of the answer he gives to the question, 'What am I?' and the paradox consists of man's attempt to prove he is not what he is, but something greater"

23 May, 1930

### THE FRIEND

p456-457(W)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE AT WOODBROOKE

#### 1

### TO THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

THE famous Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, arrived at Woodbrooke yesterday, having come almost directly from Paris, where by the kindness of some of his friends, an extremely successful exhibition has just been held, at a well-known gallery, of the sketches to which he has been giving more and more of his time during the past two years.

A little group of Woodbrookers was gathered at New Street station to welcome our distinguished guest; and it was a memorable sight to see his striking and venerable figure, clothed in a long flowing brown garment, like a Franciscan habit, framed in the

railway-carriage door. The poet's great stature, his long white beard, and his clear olive-tinted complexion, make him a joy behold. With him came his private secretary, Arian Williams, an Indian Christian, who for some time was a travelling secretary of the Student Christian Movement in this country, and was last in Birmingham as a delegate to the Copec Conference.

Immediately after the poet's taxi arrived at Woodbrooke, students and staff gathered in the Common Room to welcome our guests. The Director of Studies, Herbert G. Wood, told the poet how glad we were to have him amongst us, and how many are the links by which we have already felt ourselves to be bound in friendship with Santiniketan, the poet's educational settlement in Bengal.

Rabindranath Tagore then spoke briefly, saying that he felt himself already to be at home amongst Friends: and concluding with a striking phrase, "Fame is for dead men; living men need love."

On being asked this morning to give a message to the Society of Friends, the poet message to the Society of Friends, the poet gave the following:-

In our highly complex modern civilisation, mechanical forces are organised with such efficiency that the materials produced grow far in advance of man's selective and assimilative capacity to simplify them into harmony with his nature and needs. Such an intemperate overgrowth of things, like the rank vegetation of the tropics, creates confinement for man. The nest is simple, it has an easy relationship with the sky. the cage is complex and costly, it is too arrogantly itself, excommunicating whatever lies outside. And modern man is busy building his cage, fast developing his parasitism on the monster *thing*, which he allows to envelop him on all sides. He is always occupied in adapting himself to its dead angularities, limits himself to its limitations, and merely becomes a part of it.

The poet attended our devotional meeting this morning; and towards the conclusion of the meeting, which had been held almost entirely in silence, spoke somewhat as follows: "I feel strongly this morning that the surest means of realising the deepest unity of man is this serenity of silence, when the dust subsides from our mental atmosphere and the

air becomes translucent. I feel deeply thankful for these moments of peace which helps to make truth evident to our souls."

In a talk with some of us afterwards, the poet spoke of the comfort and strength which had come to him, when in New York, from attending a Friends' meeting in that city: and emphasised his belief in the sacramental value of silence.

Rabindranath Tagore is by far the greatest literary figure in modern India. His vernacular writings form in themselves the fullest manifestation and the finest fruit of the Bengali Literary Renaissance. His English works have made him famous to the ends of the earth. He had received the Nobel Prize for Literature. He has disinterred and made living for to-day the spiritual message of some of the greatest of Indian saints and thinkers. He is a distinguished political philosopher; and the prophet of a new internationalism, to be based on worldwide spiritual culture.

But to say all this of him is to express only a small part of this great Seer's significance. He stands unshakably for Reconciliation between East and West; and in his loyalty to this cause he has sacrificed without compunction his popularity and position of leadership amongst his own fellow-countrymen. He has founded the most interesting and important educational institution in present-day India, the school at Santiniketan. From this as a starting-point he has developed the famous College of International Studies at the same place, where he and his colleagues are hammering out the guiding principles of the new synthesis between the incompatible too-often hostile cultures of East and West. In this College a work of first-class importance for the future of humanity is going steadily and quietly forward.

More than all this Rabindranath Tagore has felt the aching need of his own peasant-neighbours, in their ignorance, poverty and sickness. He has of recent years developed in the neighbourhood of Santiniketan a great work for the improvement of agriculture, for the combating of malaria and other diseases, and for the improvement of conditions in the villages generally.

He is one who by his work for reconciliation and of the lightening of the burdens of humanity stands in the front rank of the world's great men. His message to our Society is a gesture of friend-

ship from India at a time when Indians find it very hard to be friendly towards Englishmen. It is a message to be received with respect and veneration, and to be pondered with attention.

### *Woodbrooke, May 14th*

## II

ON May 14th, the Poet gave a reading from his works in the Woodbrooke Common Room, for the benefit of the Woodbrooke students and staff. At the beginning of the meeting he was presented with a bouquet of blue-bells and cowslips by the youngest child but one in the Woodbrooke circle (the youngest of all was born to our exchange-professor from Santiniketan, Amiya Chakravarti, on the very day of the Poet's arrival).

Before starting his reading, Rabindranath Tagore gave a brief account of the manner in which, during a time of ill-health and despondency, he began the translating of some of his songs from Bengali into English: and how at first he could scarcely bring himself to believe the assurances of his friends that they should be published. He then read us a considerable number of pieces from *Gitanjali* and *The Crescent Moon*. His voice, which is generally low and faint, gradually became strong and inspired, as the reading went forward; and he succeeded in bringing, to the minds of many of us, new meanings of beauty from what he read. Especially memorable was it to hear – and to see – him read those great words: "Our Master Himself has joyfully taken upon Him the bonds of creation: He is bound in our midst for ever." To one at least of the Poet's hearers those words have seemed the greatest that he has written, and one of the greatest religious utterances of all time.

Rabindranath Tagore is a hard worker. In spite of his great age, and his physical weakness, he rises at five, and does not retire till midnight. He is hard at work nearly all the day, at present most of his time being occupied in giving the final touches to his Hibbert Lectures, to be delivered at Oxford.

.During the afternoon of May 15th, the poet was taken in a car to see the bluebells at one or two points in the forest of Arden. He afterwards had tea with Dr. Rendel Harris. Before tea Mr. Halliday, of the Selly Oak Colleges, took several photographs of the two veterans side by side – it

was a sight very well worth photographing. At 8.30 on the same morning Rabindranath Tagore had been present as the central figure in the terminal Woodbrooke group.

On the evening of May 15th the Poet came up to the George Cadbury Hall (the central place of assembly of the Selly Oak Colleges), and spoke to a crowded meeting, from a chair on the platform. He first read a paper on "civilisation and progress." In the course of this he told us of a Mahsud village, in which some aviators of the Royal Air Force, who had been forced down during a bombing raid, were hospitably entertained by the 'savage' inhabitants whom they had come to kill. He also spoke of a motor journey which he has once taken to Calcutta from a point about one hundred miles north of the city. The party had frequent need of water. This was given freely in the country villages, payment being refused, though the people were very poor, and water was precious. But when Calcutta was reached, where the people were well off, although water was easy to obtain, and there were signs of 'progress' on every hand, payment was demanded. He spoke also of a child, who had played contentedly amongst its fellows with village toys; but when an expensive English toy was given to it, that child thought itself progressive, lost all its generous joy in sharing its possessions with others, and became stingy and covetous. He concluded with a striking comparison, modern civilisation being likened to a market-cart, heavily loaded, labouring creakingly onward 'from things to nothing', and leaving ugly rhyots across the green plain as it goes forward.

Here are a few saying from the Poet's conversation or lectures here:

"There is a cruelty in translations, for it means dragging things from their true shelter into unaccustomed surroundings."

"English consonants have a musical sound like pebbles over which a stream is running."

"A mere movement is not valuable in itself"

(To a friend who had come down from London for one day): "You have caught the hurrying spirit of the West. You will lose your soul. You must go back to India at once."

"Real freedom expresses its joy in obligations owed and paid to others"

"The power to renounce is the power to create."

"Our true life lies at a great depth within us. Our restlessnesses and weaknesses are in reality merely stirrings of the surface. That is why we must daily retire in silence far into the quiet depths of our spirits, and experience the real life within us. If we do this, our words and actions will come to be real also."

*Woodbrooke, May 16th 1930.*

J.S.H.

*24 May, 1930*

**OXFORD MAIL**

p8c5(DE)

### **GANDHI EXPLAINED BY TAGORE**

**"His Long, Lingering Faith is Lost."**

#### **INTERDEPENDENCE**

**Mr. Gandhi has lost his long, lingering faith in the government in spite of the fact that the present Viceroy is the best type of English gentleman - which means the best specimen of humanity.**

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, the Indian poet, made this statement on the Indian situation at the annual general meeting of the Society of Friends in London to-day.

Personally, however, he observed, had very little room in India's Government, which was a complicated machine, producing perfect results so long as the subject race meekly-behaved like dead material yielding to machine made law and order.

Europe's quickening touch had gradually awakened the dormant life of India. But the expert in the Government engine-room was now indignant that the system no longer produced the old results.

Gandhi had requested the expert to remember that he too was a man.

#### **"Her Lights were Dim**

"Your great people is not behind this fight. I have a firm faith in what is human in your nation, and the credit is yours for this very struggle that has been made possible to-day in India.

"When the West came to our door, Asia was asleep. Her lights were dim and her voice mute.

"We haven't seen the great in the West because we have failed to bring out the great that we have in us, and we delude ourselves into thinking that we can hide this deficiency behind borrowed feathers.

"This is why we claim freedom, in order to find a real basis for interdependence.

#### **Misuse of the Truth**

"The West has brought to Asia not only science, but an impious use of truth for the violent purpose of self-seeking, which converts it into a disruptive force.

"It is producing a diseased mentality, a philosophy of survival, fit for a world of tigers.

"To save ourselves from the anarchy of weak faith we must stand up to-day and judge the West. But we must guard against antipathy that produces blindness.

"Yet it is difficult to acknowledge the best in Western civilisation when we are humiliated.

"Let us, the dreamers of the East and West, keep our faith firm in the life that creates, and not the machine that constructs,

"I believe in the individuals of the West for I can't afford to lose my faith in man. In the life of these individuals will be wedded East and West."

27 May, 1930

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p7c4-6(D)

## **TAGORE'S HIBBERT LECTURES**

### **His Personal Religious Experience**

#### **THE BUDDHIST FAITH**

**Sir Michael Sadler's Tribute to the Indian Poet**

**(From a Special Correspondent.)**

**Oxford, MONDAY.**

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's last Hibbert Lecture at Manchester College to-night was more crowded than ever in spite of the counter-attraction of Eights Week, and the burst of applause at the close lasted several minutes. Afterwards Sir Michael Sadler, Master of University College, expressed the deepest gratitude of the audience.

"We wish to express our joy", he said, "that you were able to come to Oxford so that we might listen to the perfect cadence of your voice and feel the spell of your presence. We wish to tell you that the spirit of the word that has fallen from you has united us together. We thank you that, like another poet, you have unlocked your heart to us in personal reminiscence and have told us concerning your own religious experience. We shall never forget in Oxford the gift you have given us and the inspiration you have brought to us".

The poet began by narrating certain intimate personal experiences of his own early religious life. In this way he endeavoured to show his audience how our own inner religion may suddenly well up and give us surprises, unexpectedly appearing from the unknown realm of our personal consciousness. This personal experience had convinced the poet that while superficially in our daily life we have to deal with the ever-changing phases of the individual self, yet at the very same time in the depth of our being there is ever dwelling the eternal spirit of human unity, who is beyond our direct knowledge, but none the less intimately our very own.

This spirit of humanity, which the poet had called in his lectures the supreme man in us, very often contradicted the trivialities of our daily life. The arrangements we made for securing our personal exclusiveness and narrow isolation were often upset. The walls

of individual habits and superficial conventions were broken down. This spirit of the supreme man in us works within us (said the poet) those events in human history which are truly the self-expression of the universal mind. It invokes, even in the uprisings of supreme personal devotion and marvellous sacrifice for the good of the whole. At its call men hasten to dedicate their life to the cause of truth, which is also the cause of beauty. In spite of spiritual inertness and lack of faith men become ready to undertake disinterested service on behalf of humanity.

### **A Spiritual Experience**

In this connection, the poet stated that when he was eighteen years of age a remarkable spiritual experience of this very kind had come to himself. It had left in his mind a permanent message of supreme spiritual reality. One day while he stood watching at early dawn the sun's fitful rays breaking through the trees in front of him he had suddenly felt as if some veil had been withdrawn from the face of nature and a universal meaning had been given to the complicated tangle of life. The invisible screen of commonplace ideas had been removed in a moment, and the vision of one all-pervading beauty filled his inner consciousness with supreme joy. There came to him an unlimited expansion of spiritual life in the superpersonal world of man.

Immediately after this spiritual experience he had written a poem called "The Awakening of the Waterfall". In this poem he had described how the waterfall, whose spirit had remained dormant throughout the winter in the icy enclosure of separateness, was suddenly touched by the warm rays of the sun in springtime, and had at last burst out into a flood of freedom. It had found again its original and ultimate meaning in a unity with the sea. Dr. Tagore explained how the vision passed away, but the effect of it still remained in his own life, giving him an inner sense of the unity of humanity which he could never fail to hold with all his heart.

### **Songs of Bengal Villagers**

At a later period in his lecture the poet went on to mention the songs he had heard from wandering village singers belonging to a popular sect of Bengali called the Bauls. These Bauls have no

images, temples, scriptures, or ceremonials. They declare in their songs the divinity of man, calling humanity the supreme man. They express for this supreme man an intense feeling of love and devotion.

"This faith in ideal humanity coming from men who are villagers living a simple life in obscurity gives us," said Dr. Tagore, "a clue to the deep inner meaning of all religions. For it suggests to us that true religion never sets forward for our worship a god of mere cosmic force, but rather draws our homage toward a god of human personality.

"The power that rules the starry universe has neither goodness nor badness in the rule of cosmic law. Such a power must always remain unknown and unrealised by the human mind, having no quality that can bring it into kinship with ourselves. It is an infinity of power and extension, an abstract metaphysics of existence. With such a power we can have no mutual dealings. But on the other hand there is such a thing as profoundness of spiritual perfection; there is the infinite value of human personality which can only be reached by realising ourselves in its bosom, through love, through goodness and truth, and through all that is eternally human."

### **Buddhism and the Ideal Man**

Tagore explained again in this lecture how Buddhism had been found wanting by many persons in the West because it appeared to have no mention of God in it. But the ideal man (whatever name may have been given to him) in whom we can find ourselves through love and human goodness has been most strongly emphasised in this Buddhist religion. Indeed it is evident that according to the Buddhist faith our own bondage comes through our sense of isolation from the ideal of humanity. Our freedom lies in our identification with humanity through the removal of the obstructing barrier of self.

The author concluded his very deeply moving lecture by declaring that this vision of the supreme man is realised by our imagination, but it is not created by our imagination. More real than the individual man, the ideal man surpasses each of us in his permeating personality which is transcendental. The procession of his ideas following his great purpose ever moves across the path of obstructing facts toward the perfected truth. We, the individuals, who have our place in humanity as a

whole may or may not be in conscious harmony with its purpose as a whole. We may even put obstacles in the pathway of true human progress, bringing down our own doom upon ourselves. This if it ever happens to us is irreligion. But true religion is gained by us when we consciously co-operate with the supreme man in us, and find our exceeding joy even through suffering and sacrifice on humanity's behalf. For through our own love for the ideal man we are made conscious of a great love that radiates from the Supreme Spirit Himself.

### **Tagore's Personality**

No series of Hibbert lectures that has been delivered in recent times has had such an enthusiastic welcome and such an over-flowing audience as those which have been given by Tagore. Though the subject was difficult to follow yet it was rendered luminous throughout by bright gleams of humour and remarkably lucid illustrations. Above all, the personality of the poet as he spoke with the sunshine falling on his white head and lighting up his beautiful face made comparatively easy even his most difficult thoughts. Indeed they would have been often hard to understand if they had not been thus interpreted by his living voice and glowing spirit.

Oxford has rarely received such a gift from the East as she has received during these last ten days with the visit of Rabindranath Tagore.

On Sunday, when Dr. Tagore preached at Manchester College Chapel, the congregation was so great that many had to remain standing around the walls and others found seats on the steps leading to the pulpit.

27 May, 1930

### **OXFORD MAIL**

p4c3-8 and also p6c3-4 (DE)

### **THE WORK OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

#### **WHY HE REJECTED HIS KNIGHTHOOD**

RABINDRANATH TAGORE, when his age was much less advanced than it is at present, had

already won for himself a world-wide reputation as poet, thinker and educationist. He is regarded as a sage in his own country, and his wide knowledge of European cultures and civilisations will entitle him to the same respect in the West as he is given in the East.

Yet he cannot be considered as a cosmopolitan character. He comes to us with no synthesis of Eastern idealism and Western empiricism (I use the words as widely and as loosely as may be allowed to me.) His mind is Oriental through and through. He has nothing to teach us, except what we do not know.

It is convenient nowadays to forget Tagore's protest against England and Europe during the war. He then asked to be deprived of his knighthood, and when informed that a knighthood, once given was given for good, he refused himself to use the title "Sir" with which the British Government had presented him. He was not the only one of his race who was offended at the sight of Europe in arm against herself.

And though his famous school in India may seem like a new Athenian Lyceum, where scholars go in the shade of great trees, peripatetic; or like a new type of German school; nevertheless there is still more of the East than of the West in Tagore's education. For the primary concern of Western education is still the three R's, brass tacks; whereas Tagore will always be concerned first with truth, and then with facts afterwards.

His poetry has been translated in nearly every European language. Yet how alien it is. Yeats wrote a preface to one of Tagore's books, and says in it that he found himself entering a quite new world as he read Tagore's poems while sitting on the top of the bus. What is a new world to Yeats, is a strange world to most of us.

Not that Tagore's verse is difficult or obscure. It is crystal clear; but it is written from another continent. In its abstraction, its constant use of earthly things as spiritual symbols, it is nearer to the poetry of Shelley than to that of any other Western writer. But Shelley is unpopular with our newer poets, and so is Tagore. For Tagore's first concern is with God, a God of whom the East has never for a moment lost sight. So there is a conviction in his approach, a spontaneity in his devotion. But for a long time now our own poets

have been on a different road. We simply have not the nerve nowadays to write mystical verse, to start as a poem.

"Thou art the sky, and thou art also  
the nest.  
O thou beautiful!"

And so, although Tagore's poetry has been popular amongst some people for some time, and though the very essence of his English will always give his verse distinction, it would be safe to prophecy that his work will not be at all closely related to the English poetry of his day. His ways are not our ways and never can be unless and until, as Count Keyserling prophesied might happen, the West goes over to the East, makes philosophy its religion and forget its last disreputable two thousand years.

But if we cannot immitate, we can approve and admire. And then there is much to be admired in a poet, a musician, a teacher and a thinker.

R. E. WARNER.

[from p6c3-4]

### DR. TAGORE TELLS OXFORD SOME OF HIS EXPERIENCES

#### When "The Screen of the Commonplace was Removed from All Things."

The third and final Hibbert lecture on "The Religion of Man" was delivered yesterday at Manchester College, Oxford by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, who narrated various incidents in his life.

He told of a "sudden spiritual outburst like the welling-up of a subterranean stream," and of his "intimacy of pervasive companionship with tropical nature." At the age of 18 he had a "sudden spring breeze of religious experience, a direct message of spiritual reality."

"This revealed an inner radiance of joy. The screen of the commonplace was removed from all things and all men, and their ultimate significance was intensified in my mind, which is the definition of beauty.

"After four days the vision faded away. In the dark, the world once again put on the disguise of ordinary fact.

"The religion of man is the infinite defined in

humanity. It comes close to me, and needs my love and co-operation. Love is the magic stone, which transmutes greed into sacrifice."

### Infinite Perspective

At this point, Dr. Tagore quoted both from his own poems and from the wandering singers of Bengal. There is, he said, in the latter a striking originality of sentiment and diction.

"Man finds his religion," he went on, "in the infinite perspective of human personality. He can never go beyond man. If this faith is to be blamed for being anthropomorphic, man must be blamed for being man,

"The best definition of man is that of the poet, we are the music makers, we are the dreamers of dream."

"To-day our needs have multiplied so furiously fast that we have lost our religion, our longing for the touch of the divine in man. We have torn in shreds our ideal humanity.

### Music and Motor horns

"Music has a truth which cannot be analysed into fractions. This is the difference between music and the bellowing impertinence of a motor horn.

"So man infinitely transcends the component parts of himself, just as love is more than the physical plus the spiritual. It is not merely our primitive stomachs hungering for flesh.

"Many are to-day committing arson in setting fire to the time-honoured altars of our worship. Our idols, if beautiful, are said to be made of mud. The whole creation is a gigantic dissent from this modern point of view.

"The function of civilisation is to keep alive faith in the reality of the divine vision."

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30 May, 1930

### THE FRIEND

p470-471(W)

Perhaps the biggest and most difficult subject came before us on Saturday afternoon. The House was crowded long before the time for the opening, in

view of the invitation to Rabindranath Tagore to attend and make a statement. Everybody felt something of its significance, remembering the lowering darkness of the background in India, the other great Indian leader lying in prison, the personality of our visitor, the traditions of the Society and the duty that might lie before us.

The Poet, dressed in a long blue robe, quietly took his place beside the Clerk just as the session was about to open. He was accompanied by C. F. Andrews; and several Indians were present. There was a very impressive and unbroken time of silence. Horace G. Alexander then introduced the subject of India, a most difficult task in the circumstances, wonderfully performed. He gave us a series of intimate glimpses into India and its problems and begged us to search our hearts in penitence for the clouds that have come to prevent the two peoples from coming into union of heart.

What this gentle, beautiful and saintly figure had to say entered into the heart of the meeting with a sharp edge, for it was a cry from the heart of India, a cry for release from the iron bands of a machine-like system of government that was fettering her soul and her body. The address, courteous in manner but very direct, levelled an accusing finger at the Government of India, speaking of pride and power and self-aggrandisement so strongly in contrast with the Christian teaching that the meek should inherit the earth, and speaking too of suffering and indignity and exploitation. But it was not a destructive speech; its burden was an appeal to idealism, to generosity and to co-operation. While it spoke of loss of faith in the government, and the bureaucracy was declared to have no tradition of human sympathy and to be unable to understand; yet it was the machine of switches and handles and heels that was arraigned. To the people of England there was tribute for their having taught India the ideal of freedom, and an appeal to the west "to keep faith firm in the life that creates and not in the machine that constructs" – and to join hands with the east in establishing a comradeship in which interests would never clash. For absolute independence was impossible to any man. Interdependence was his nature and his highest goal.

John S. Hoyland followed with some words on his experience in India as a member of what was looked upon as an oppressive, tyrannical and bullying race, and appealed to the Church to wipe away the stain of hatred. Ought we not, he asked, to send a message to the Labour party meeting on the 27th, declaring that the Society believed that men and nations had the right to choose their own future? This suggestion immediately brought John W. Graham on to his feet to protest against putting the Society on the side of Gandhi and rebellion. He entered on a sharp criticism, in courteous terms of course, of Tagore's address, denying that England was in India for the ignoble purpose of self-aggrandisement and pointing to her record of service. If the English left, there would be more slavery, not less, under a Brahminical tyranny. Reconciliation would be possible if Mr. Gandhi would call off the revolt and share in the Round Table Conference.

A little later Rabindranath Tagore rose to leave and the whole meeting rose too to greet him. In a few further sentences he expressed quietly and with great charm his regret if his words had caused bitterness. "You are the true lovers of humanity," he said, and appealed once again for the co-operation of the two peoples. With an Indian bow Tagore left the platform.

The meeting was continued with some sense of difficulty for, mixed with knowledge of the gravity of the occasion, there was indignation and pain in it; for political allegiances were taking control instead of "guidance". Then the discussion was suddenly torpedoed by the question whether Tagore's address ought to have been printed in advance with the Service Council's name on it. It was, perhaps, a small point; but there seemed to be no alternative but to withdraw the pamphlet from sale temporarily in order to get some words printed upon it disavowing responsibility. When that difficulty had been got out of the way the time was nearly gone;

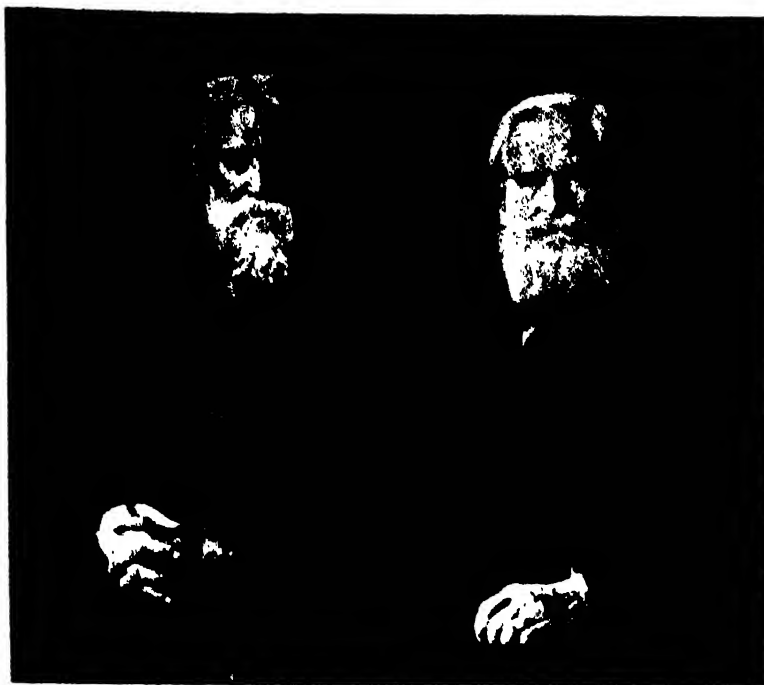


Photo W. F. Holliday  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND HENDEL

Fig. 44 *The Friend*, 30 May, 1930, p490-491

but Friends were evidently not satisfied. The Agenda Committee was therefore asked to find time for a continued discussion; and it was announced later that the subject would be resumed on the Monday.

One very happy feature of the Tagore session was the presence in the gallery during his address of a large party of young people, the 'elevens' to 'fifteens' of the Society. They had suspended the sitting of the 'Junior Yearly Meeting,' in order to come in to hear the Poet. When he had finished they trooped out to resume business. As a matter of fact, in addition to the usual children's meeting, for the youngsters three full-dress Yearly Meetings have been held ("by adjournments") almost concurrently. There was on Saturday the Junior Yearly Meeting just referred to, with "The Meaning of friendship" as the principal item on its agenda. On Sunday Young Friends, officially but not quite exclusively the "under thirties," held two sessions in the Small Meeting-house. The third Yearly Meeting on the list is, of course, the effort of the ancient and public Friends in the Large Meeting-house, not always as thrilling as the other two.

On Sunday afternoon Young Friends' agenda was almost completely changed by concern over the Tagore session of the previous day. Floor and gallery were full, and feeling had evidently been deeply stirred by what occurred after the Poet's address. An admirably conducted meeting, which went far to reassure any who might have felt doubts about the future of the Society, wanted to declare itself expressively, but was restrained in true Quaker fashion. A committee was asked to draft a possible minute to the Yearly Meeting. After a tea interval C. F. Andrews spoke with great power, bringing a beautiful message from Rabindranath Tagore, saying that he welcomed and appreciated the deep sincerity and frankness of the Saturday meeting, and was deeply grateful for everything that was said. C. F. Andrews went on to appeal so evidently from his heart for prayer "night and day" for "the great heroic figures" in conflict in India, and spoke so movingly of the Viceroy, that the whole meeting was lifted on to another plane. There was some doubt whether the draft minute then brought in was adequate or indeed necessary; but, after discussion, and a little amendment, it was adopted and the meeting decided to ask for a Young Friend permission to speak to it in Yearly Meeting.

[From p490-494]

### **Rabindranath Tagore's Visit to Yearly Meeting**

*This is no one-sided service, for it is one in which all the while we are receiving and learning from others, as we travel together along the Way, and seek not only to teach the truth we have learned, but to learn more of the truth, endeavouring to follow the Master, and to remove the barriers of wrong in individual, social and racial relationships that keep us from Him, and from each other. We have to discover the possibilities of friendship, to be friends, to make friends in the name of the great friend of Man.*

*From Report of Friends' Service Council.*

### **SEVENTH-DAY AFTERNOON**

About twelve hundred friends gathered in the afternoon, and Rabindranath Tagore, with C. F. Andrews, came in at the commencement, and joined in the deep silence which many no doubt felt themselves linked up with the great masses in India.

The CLERK expressed our pleasure that our

friend Rabindranath Tagore had felt able to accept the invitation to be with us, and said that he would feel in the silence that we were greeting him in our hearts and coming together in the desire for the good of the world which bound all earnest souls together, and that he would feel free to say to us that which was in his heart; but that we would first listen to Horace Alexander, and later some of the children and young people in our schools would be coming in to listen to our guest as well.

We were also reminded that when our session was over, our "Junior Yearly Meeting" would still be sitting in the Small Meeting-house.

HORACE G. ALEXANDER said he wanted to look at India especially from the point of view of Friends. The first picture that came to his mind was of a little town and village set between the jungle and the sacred Nerbudda River in the central provinces of India, where for nearly two generations Friends from this country had given their lives in service and in love. He hoped we should never forget that work to which we had set our hands. In a quiet little cemetery the names of Friends were recorded who had died in the prime of life. Their devoted work was not lost. Travelling further, you came to the little village on the edge of the jungle, where the children are delighted to explain the work they are doing. You could go to the Girl's high School at Sohagpur and watch those girls who were learning to become clear-sighted, brave mothers of the India that was to be. There was the hospital at Itarsi and many other things. Two other places in India meant much to us to-day. First we turned to Santiniketan personified there that afternoon, of which he would only say that when he first went there he felt at once he was in a place where the whole community was guided and inspired by a belief in the essential or potential goodness of man, or, perhaps, a belief in the divine that was in every man. We rejoiced to think that our fellow member of the Society of Friends, J. Nalin Ganguli, had done such fine work to-day under the leadership of Rabindranath Tagore. On the other side of India from Bengal to Karachi, looking across to the chimneys of the mills at Allahabad, the spirit of the East and the spirit of the West almost clashing together, he thought of Mahatma Gandhi working in utter humility and simplicity and of his devoted followers whom he had had the privilege to meet,

many of them young men who had come forward to follow him. He thought more especially of his own friend Reginald Reynolds, who had thrown himself into the work of reconciliation. But a shadow had come over him as one realised how the storm had arisen, how feelings of hatred and bitterness were taking possession of men's hearts. He said to himself and to the Society of friends that afternoon: "Have we done what we ought to have done to prevent the gathering of that cloud of darkness and hatred and suspicion?" If we had, as he felt we had, failed somehow in our duty, could we rise more faithfully to that duty to-day? He referred to the Indian students at the Gower Street Hostel by whom he was always received with affection and kindness. The more he saw them the more he realised that his friendship with them was nothing compared with the good things he brought away. He realised his shortcomings when he mixed with them, and he thought these shortcomings were typical of English people. There was the pride of race and world success. We must go back to the words of that great human which was the great favourite of Mahatma Gandhi and which must surely be a solace to him in these days of imprisonment at Poona.

"Forbid it Lord that I should boast  
Save in the Cross of Christ my Lord"

Could we that day search our hearts as Friends, then look into the hearts of our fellow-countrymen, and perhaps send out a message calling them to repentance at the foot of the Cross of Christ? If only some word of ours could bring any such sense of national humiliation he believed the clouds of bitterness which seemed spread over the world to-day would be dispersed.

The CLERK read the Minute regarding the visit of Rabindranath Tagore.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE said: My friends, accept my full gratitude for the welcome you have offered to me and for asking me to talk to you about a subject which I have in my heart and which is of serious importance to-day. It needs intelligent deliberation, without any feeling of giving pain, and I have written something specially for this occasion in order to try to convey my message. I find it painfully difficult to do my duty, for we want conciliation between two peoples who for over a cen-

tury have had a close connection and yet are separated by moral distances more difficult of overcoming than mountain or sea. The inevitable has happened. India is being ruled by a machine, and there exists the dark chasm of aloofness instead of the living touch of sympathy, and there is a disease in our political conditions, which can only be cured by a generous co-operation from both sides and a union of minds which know how to make proper allowances for weakness in human nature, and at the same time may keep faith in human nature.

Our task is every day growing harder, for the situation is left in the hands of politicians who represent the machine of organisation. My appeal to-day is to the noble idealism which made your own history glorious in your own land and which can extend its glory to an alien country. Once Asia, in her springtime of exuberant life offered the world her spiritual ideas, and to-day Europe in the great illumination of her intellect has brought forward her science and her spirit of service; but unfortunately she has not come to Asia to reveal the generosity of her civilisation, but has come with a hard hand, using the truth itself for an ignoble purpose of self-aggrandisement. In order to awaken her to her own great sense of responsibility, Asia must refuse to yield to slavery and to the ambitious belief that humanity can ever succeed with only the help of science. The meek shall inherit the earth, and let India, whose suffering is very great, also make this true. It is India's great responsibility to the world to win in this fight a moral victory, and to turn all hurts and indignities shown upon her by physical might, into a majestic revelation of human souls as opposed to the machine; If only our relationships could be mutually set right. Mahatma Gandhi last year accepted the declaration to apply independence to India, and on account of that the path of mutual understanding had been hopelessly closed to him. This had happened in spite of the fact that our present Viceroy was the best type of English gentleman, which, according to me, means the best statesman of humanity. I do not fully know what were the reasons for this scepticism, for he had a great admiration for Lord Irwin. Fundamental changes are necessary to restore the centre of gravity. The economists who drive the complicated machine in India have had long training in power,

but they have no tradition in human sympathy which is superficial in a workshop! They have no understanding of India; if they had, it would simplify the task. The people who are morally responsible for this standardised rule, live across a far-away sea, and there is a murmuring silence brooding over a vast country, a peace which is uncreative, but the life of India is awakening. Machine manufacture for over a century gives a blind sense of efficiency. Mahatma Gandhi tried to request the expert not to identify himself completely with the machine, but to remember that he is a man; for the sake of his human dignity he must not offer a stone to other men who are famishing for bread. There are thousands in my country who at this very moment are suffering without any chance of redress, even those who do not deserve it, for the machine government lets loose its fury of wholesale suspicion. It is a desperate struggle and man defeats the machine not always by his success, but by his sufferings. I deliberately use the word machine, for it is not your great people who are behind this; I have a firm faith in what is human in your nation. The courage which has been aroused in our country, and the suffering, carries with it an unconscious admiration for your own people in its very challenge. It is a moral challenge being sure of a moral response, when our claim is made to you by our sufferings. I dare ask you to contradict me when I say that such sufferings have won your admiration, and you secretly feel small because of what you allow to be perpetrated upon a people who are no match for you in returning your insults. You cannot belie your real nature and all that has made you great. Gandhi asked you to take the other side and to gain the greatest of all human rights—freedom and to free yourselves from the one-sided relationship of exploitation which is causing degeneration in our people without your knowing it.

I have been asked by some of you whether we must have independence. Interdependence is in the nature of man and is his highest goal. All that is best has been achieved by mutual exchange of minds and resources among peoples who are far apart. This spirit must come over men's politics, which, for want of it, are poisoned with envy and hatred. I ask that the best minds of the East and West join hands and establish truly a comradeship of interdependence between England and India in which interests may never clash and in which they may

gain an abiding strength of life through a spirit of mutual service without having to bear the perpetual burden of slavery on one side and disease responsibility on the other, both of which are demoralising. Nothing could have been more unfortunate in the history of man than this. For all meetings of men should reveal some great truth worthy of a permanent memorial. At the moment when the West came to our door, the whole of Asia was as if a darkness had come over her life. Her lights were dim, her voice mute, she had stored up her treasure; no longer growing, she had her wisdom shut in her books. She was not producing fresh forms of beauty of moving onward. She was not ready to receive the West in all her majesty of soul.

To remain in the fullness of our manifestation is our duty, not only for ourselves, but for others. We have not seen the greatness in the West because we have failed to bring out the greatness in ourselves. We have deluded ourselves. We must find a real basis for inter expression that we find in the lives of the best individuals in Western countries is their love of humanity, their spirit working through their character, their indomitable will leaguering them together for human welfare. In their individuals this is revealed in loyalty to the cause of truth and many of them are willing to suffer martyrdom, often standing heroically alone against some fury of their own national insanity. We want a fullness of intelligent serve, to grow, which will ignore geographical limitations. Science is truth and therefore welcome, but it must not be governed by the spirit of self-seeking, for then it produces a diseased mentality. Doctors know that infusion of animal blood into human veins does not give vigour to men, but produces death, and the intrusion of the animal into humanity will never make for its survival.

Faith in man is weakening, even in the East, and we must guard against antipathy that produces blindness and must not hinder ourselves from receiving truth. Until we fully accept truth in a right spirit, we shall never even discover what is truth in our own civilisation nor make it generously fruitful by offering it to the world. It is difficult for us to acknowledge the best in the Western civilisation and accept it when we are humiliated, and this has been the reason why the West has not yet found our heart. There will be a new federation of minds in the day of enlightenment.

I ask you once again my friends to let us, the dreamers of the East and West, keep our faith firm in the Life that creates and not in the machine that constructs, in the power that hides its force and blossoms in beauty and not in the power that bares its arms and chuckles at its capacity to make itself obnoxious. Let us support only a machine which helps and not one which exploits life; science is great when it dispels evil, but not when it comes into unholy alliance with it. Before I conclude, I ask your leave to say that I believe in individuals in the West, for I cannot afford to lose my faith in Man. There are bleeding hearts, but their lamps of sacrifice will burn through this storm along the great pilgrim tract of the future when the truth will be triumphant.

The CLERK expressed our indebtedness to our guest, and before leaving Rabindranath Tagore said, "I must express my regret for causing some sense of irritation, my only object was that the interest you have in the Indian nation led me to say what I have felt. I ask you to join with us in striving to gain freedom in co-operation with each other not in the spirit of eternal spite and jealousy and hatred. That was my object. You are the true lovers of humanity and so without the least hesitation, I say that I feel I am not misunderstood. I ask you for your co-operation and that you may realise yourselves in our place and recall the time when your own brothers in America wanted to secure their freedom with blood. Will you realise we want the privilege of serving our own country in our own way and to solve our problems. Give us the right to serve our own country."

MARGARET MARTINDALE felt it had been a great privilege to be there to listen to our friend from India. There were many humble Friends with hearts full of love for India who believed in the Fatherhood of God and the love of God to man.

JOHN S. HOYLAND referred to his sixteen years' life in India in a great city where he was one of two or three white men working in the midst of some 150,000 Indians, and he knew what it was to be looked upon as an oppressor, a tyrant and a bully. He thought the greatest task in front of the Christian Church was to wipe away the stain of hatred from the face of humanity. He had come to see in the Cross of Christ the love of God that would trust freedom to the very end. He had a vision of our Society at this time being true to the great generation a hundred years ago which stood

at all costs for freedom in the cause of another race, and yet a race which did not believe itself to be more enslaved than India now believed itself to be enslaved. In The Times that morning he read that on the following Tuesday a meeting had been arranged by the Labour Party to consider the question of India. Would it be possible for us as a Society sending a message that we believed that men and nations had a right to decide their own future?

JOHN W. GRAHAM was sorry that the Yearly Meeting should have entered upon a political discussion at all. Had we confined our consideration to the proper purpose of Yearly Meeting, to more spiritual matters, more good would have been done. He strongly dissented from the suggestion of writing to the Labour Party. It was a serious thing to let it be generally known that we were on the side of rebellion, on the side of independence. To do anything of that kind would need very prolonged and thoughtful discussion. He had been pleased to listen to our distinguished guest and friend Rabindranath Tagore, but he did not like his expressions with regard to the English Government, - such expressions as "ignoble self-aggrandisement," "slavery, cruelty and exploitation." The English had broken the fetters of slavery, they had helped the 'Untouchables'. Not one penny had ever gone from the revenues of India to the revenues of England. Those officials who lived there amid the chaos and ruin just had ordinary salaries. There had been no exploitation by them. It was more on the other side: India had put 15 per cent upon our goods imported into India, which would affect Lancashire and Yorkshire, as well as the iron and steel industry. It was all to no purpose, many of these things India could not make. It was not idealists like Rabindranath Tagore, C. F. Andrews or Mahatma Gandhi that we had to deal with, but a very difficult people indeed, whose politics were childish. We must not have sentimental generalisation, but prosaic reality. To talk about 'national mental mechanics' was quite strong. These officials were not inhuman, they were conscientiously doing their work with their backs against the wall. To speak of exploitation was quite incorrect. If the British left India, she would be more enslaved. The Brahmans might be in power and what would happen to the widows whom we were trying to help and the 'Untouchables'? India was so divided horizontally and perpendicularly by unsympathetic and hostile

barriers, personal barriers, of race and religion that it was almost impossible to have a united India. It grated on him to have to say these things in the presence of Rabindranath Tagore, but he could not be silent after such a suggestion as had been made. He agreed that an attempt should be made at reconciliation, if such people as Tagore and C. F. Andrews would try and induce Gandhi to cease his opposition. R. Tagore had spoken of a conference of the best brains of both countries, but the Government had already done what they could. There was the Simon commission, then the Mount Pleasant Conference, but instead of waiting for the opinion of India to grow legally, constitutionally, there was this movement of rebellion led by Gandhi.

MARIAN PARMOOR quoted words spoken by an English Bishop: "We must think of nations and of people in the way that God sees them." She agreed with Horace Alexander that the right place of the Society of friends at this moment, and for our nation and all nations, was the place of repentance at the foot of the Cross of Christ. There we should see the way of light, the way of redemption, the way of reconciliation. She thought it might be good for us to issue some note of reconciliation, some call to repentance.

JOHN S. STEPHENS said two worlds were in conflict. We belonged to a group of people who for more than 150 years called themselves Friends of Truth. H. G. Wood suggested that morning that we would now like to be called "Friends of Jesus" and it was He who said that wisdom was found more in babes and sucklings than in the mighty ones. The constitution of the British Government in India in all its political wisdom, careful calculation and scheming was not so strong as were those who put Christ and His love in the first place. The profound and wonderful message from the East was calling us as mere children before our Master. Let us forget our national pride, our national glory (we need not belittle our British Empire), let us put them in their right place, and be lifted into the realm where only love counts. The address to which we had listened had made us feel more sensitive to the suffering and less concerned for the political balance in India. We stood in the limelight of history. Future generations might look back on the decisions we made at this momentous crisis. He

believed in the gentleness and simplicity of the seer from India in our midst and of the other seer in prison. The same qualities led George Fox to go to the most eloquent exponents of Calvinist theology and tell them that their theology was not enough; the Spirit of Christ was not there.

RICHENDA PAYNE was very grateful to have been able to listen to Rabindranath Tagore. There were many of us, especially among the younger people, who sympathised with the people of India.

HENRY DEARDEN said he had travelled five years in India. Most of us thought that independence must come to India. But the emotion that afternoon was a little bit too tense; it was only natural, but we did want to handle this matter in a spirit of reconciliation. We must be careful not to do anything that would increase the fighting spirit. We needed the poetry of the East and the practicality of the West. Let us pull together in the spirit of our Lord and Master.

RACHEL RUTTER spoke of her meeting with Mahatma Gandhi within less than a week before he was imprisoned. She asked him why he did not wait until after the Simon Report was issued. He replied that before he entered on this subject of Independence and asked if the Round Table Conference would consider this first and foremost, Lord Irwin replied that they would consider everything from Slavery to Independence. Gandhi said, "I know what that means, it just means delay." She felt that the only thing we could do as the Society of Friends who believed in the love of Jesus Christ, was to unite in prayer that Gandhi, his dear wife (whom she had met), and his followers, might know what the love of Jesus means.

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*4 June, 1930*

**THE BIRMINGHAM MAIL**

p9c3(D)

## **POET AS ARTIST**

### **WORK OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

#### **BIRMINGHAM EXHIBITION**

It is impossible to apply the ordinary standards of artistic criticism to the drawings by Sir Rabindranath

Tagore now on exhibition at the Birmingham City Art Gallery. Their classification according to the date of their production, the whole of which falls within the last three years, is a sufficient indication of the fact that they are intended to be regarded as evidence of the evolution of the poet's mind, as a new means of self-expression, rather than as a progressive development of technique. Indeed, it is noticeable that the latest drawings of the group are apparently less spontaneous than the earliest – that to some extent they have become tinged with the deliberate intent towards representation which is so conspicuously absent from the work of 1928.

The first exhibit of all, a page of manuscript in which the erasures have been linked together into a harmonious whole, gives us the clue to the form taken by the original impulse which brought all the drawings into being, and their author has himself pointed out that there is in them no primary intention of representation, but they are rather an almost automation submission to a rhythmical impulse.

### **Link with Experience**

That this rhythmical impulse should almost immediately link itself up with visual experiences in the material world, is a perfectly natural thing, but if we compare the second exhibit with some others of the 1928 drawings, which definitely suggest human figures in movement, we see how very sure and natural is the step from the one, a design entirely devoid of material representation, to the others, in which reminiscence of natural forms is so strongly marked. There is no essential difference between the two, for in both rhythm is the commanding feature.

When we come, however, to the group of masks in the early part of the 1929 series we are immediately struck by the fact that although the artist is not in any way trammelled by close association with things seen, he had, in fact, become a representational artist, and the human face is, except in one or two instances, the dominant factor in these masks.

Later on we come to a very interesting development, that in which the design in deliberate aberration from natural forms, approaching in some instances the deliberately grotesque.

### **Germ of Design**

There is an immense amount of enjoyment in this group form what may be called a fortuitous germ of design and has taken an animal form exactly as he took the accidental form of his erasures as the beginning of an entirely fanciful development of design. In one or two instances we have exquisite handling of line and form in which human figures derive their beauty and their value as design, not from direct resemblance to human figures, but rather from the quality of the line by which those figures are expressed.

These are seen at their best when the line is extremely fine, and very formal, and enhanced by no colour whatever, and the range of artistic perception is very strongly emphasised when we come to the designs which depend wholly for their visual satisfaction on the colour.

Some of these latter are of astounding power. Their very deep tones and wonderfully harmonious sequence produce exactly the same effect of rhythmical balance as that which is to be observed in the purely linear work, and indeed we might sum up the whole of this exhibition as being a marvellous example of the sense of balance and of harmony, even into the most fortuitous of its forms.

### **Landscape Impressions**

The latest drawings, more especially the large heads which form the conclusion of the exhibition, are, as has been said, more closely related to representational art than the rest, and a very interesting small group of the 1930 drawings, consisting of landscape effects, might be compared without extravagance to landscape impressions by artists of the Barbison school.

But even in these, the rhythmic quality, whether of colour or of line, is the predominant factor, and it is a most instructive exercise to accompany the study of these drawings by a reading of the poems of the artist, for in both there is an outstanding quality of quietude.

Even those drawings which display the greatest action, even those poems which contain the greatest fire, are calm and steadied by a wonderful unity of spirit which delivers them from extravagance without depriving them of power.

5 June, 1930  
**EVERYMAN**  
 p579(W)

## TAGORE-POET AND PROPHET

By S. K. RATCLIFFE

TAGORE is not only the great Indian poet and man of letters who has gained a multitude of readers in the English speaking lands, he is the only master of the written word who has come out of Asia and conquered the world of Western culture.

He was first welcomed to England in the summer of 1912, at which time he was unknown because untranslated. Within eighteen months he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, and his world-wide fame was assured. There followed his astonishing personal vogue in America, and over a great part of the European continent.

It is probably true that, apart from Bernard Shaw, there is no living writer in English with a world audience as large as that commanded by the poet of Bengal, the immense body of whose work in prose and verse was locked up in his native language, Bengali, until after the completion of his own half-century.

Rabindranath Tagore was born in Calcutta on May 6, 1861. Hence his presence among us this summer, with the triumph of his Hibbert lectures at Oxford, coincides with the opening of his seventieth year. He is one of the few prophetic figures among the elders of our time, and the fact of his race and culture gives a unique character to his eminence.

For anyone who know him in middle life, and in his home province, it is naturally the contrast of place and circumstance that comes most vividly to mind.

### The Middle Years

A quarter of a century ago I used to meet him in the Calcutta of Curzon's time, and naturally it was not the poet only, or chiefly, that the Englishman came in contact with at that time.

Tagore was a fine specimen of high-bred Indian manhood. He was in the prime of life, wearing his hair and short beard in the manner of his province. He dressed in the graceful white garments

of a Bengali gentleman, and his talk as I recall it was usually of Indian public affairs, which Curzon and the British officials who were stimulated by him could be relied upon to keep bubbling. He had the grave and cordial manner and the unaffected speech of one who moved at ease in all worlds.

His fame in Bengal was remarkable. He had been publishing books from his twentieth year, and his fecundity was similar to that of the half-dozen or so great modern Europeans who have known an equal facility in prose and verse, in imagination, criticism, and ethics. He had written poems and plays, novels and short stories, essays and discourses. And his songs, numbering scores, were known to the multitude and sung by his own folk from end to end of Bengal. But all this, except by report, was unknown to us. The number of Europeans who read Bengali books is very small indeed. And it is likely that Dr. Edward Thompson, his biographer and the author of *An Indian Day*, is the only Englishman who has been through all there is of Tagore.

The poet's year was divided between the town house of his family (where the Tagores had a fine English library) and the country home and school at Bolpur, 100 miles N.E. of Calcutta, which he has since made into a centre of international culture. It was the seed-time of the movement that was to develop into Swaraj and the Gandhi crusade. The leaders of Bengal were giving utterance to the first ideas of Indian Nationalism, and the Bengali poet was in the van of that movement.

He came out as the prophet of an ideal nationalism, and young Bengal gave him an overwhelming response. The halls of Calcutta could not hold the crowds that pressed to hear him. His addresses and the songs that he threw off in the excitement of a fervid time seemed to promise that Tagore was to be the Mazzini no less than the Shelley of his people.

"It is probably true that, apart from Bernard Shaw, there is no living writer in English with a world audience as large as that commanded by Rabindranath Tagore, the poet of Bengal".

But that was not the correct reading of his destiny. He was soon to find out that the platform and the mass meeting were destructive of his proper powers. The poet could not live in that heated air.

Political agitation would have ended his life of thought. He returned to the study, and his Nationalist disciples were left to learn - as they did learn with the help of Europe and America - that a writer of genius must fulfil himself, and incidentally serve his time, in his own way. Bengal lost a political leader; India gained an incomparable advocate and the world republic of letters its first oriental citizen.

### A Changing Reputation

The head and figure of the poet-elder are known to all. As he stood in the chapel of Manchester College last week he looked and was the human symbol of a creative union of East and West. The India that has been reborn through the clash of forces, ancient and modern, could not ask for a more impressive spokesman. And Oxford said so, through the words of several of her leaders.

His reputation in England and the United States has gone through a number of stages. The American Press, of course, overplayed his first success in Europe, and Dr. Tagore is not given to concealing his judgments upon Western society and policy. The fact that a great audience will come to listen does not seem to the Indian poet any reason for modifying the pungency of his thought. This applies, of course, to England as well. Dr. Tagore's philosophy of life is in direct contrast than Gandhi himself as he is a champion of the spirit as against the weight of worldly power.

In Germany after the War Dr. Tagore had an amazing reception. A bitterly disillusioned nation found truths in his gospel that they needed, and later in Italy a great public read his books in translation. This fact is not difficult to explain. The reflective lyrics of *Gitanjali*, which for English readers will continue to be the essence of Rabindranath Tagore, go into the Italian rhythm with perfect ease.

### A Many-Sided Influence

Dr. Thompson, in his *Life* of the poet, expresses regret that Tagore should be known to Western readers through translations of books that reveal only the lyrical and mystical sides of his genius. The regret is justified, for his range as a writer is remarkable, while his positive work as teacher, reformer, and progressive citizen would make a no-

table record for any public man who had no devouring spirit of the imagination within. He is a thorough-going modernist, an active helper of all the great social causes in India. During the past two decades he has travelled repeatedly through East and West. His personal acquaintance among the world's leaders is very large. He has drawn to the Bolpur school (*Santiniketan*) many men of distinction from Europe, America, and the far East.

### The Conquering West

Being and doing all this, he is necessarily the opposite of a non-co-operator. No one has stated so powerfully as he the need of a continually enlarging interchange, both of action and of idea, between Asia and the West.

The apostles of non-co-operation, he affirms, would make of India a prison; he is for a generous opening of all the doors. His heaviest charge against the aggressive nations of the West is that, through the centuries of their dealings with the East, they have gone in the main as conquerors and exploiters, instead of as equals and friends. Our age, however, has witnessed the vast movement of Asiatic awakening, and it is clear now to all that a term has been put to the conditions that were established throughout the East by agents of the Western Powers who had no doubt of their own right and might. India to-day is in an indescribably turmoil. For that reason, if for no other, we may rejoice that in the eyes of Britain and Europe her representative man should be Rabindranath Tagore.

5 June, 1930  
THE TIMES  
p12c3(D)

### PAINTINGS OF SIR R. TAGORE

#### EXHIBITION AT BRITISH INDIAN UNION

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND presided at a meeting of the India society at the rooms of the British Indian Union, Grosvenor-gardens, last night,

when many recent paintings of Rabindranath Tagore were exhibited for the first time in this country, and the poet spoke of his discovery that he could paint in lines as well as words.

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE said that until he arrived in Europe recently he was very diffident as to the merit of his paintings, but he was encouraged by the enthusiasm for them shown by some artists he chanced to meet in the South of France, who insisted on his exhibiting some of them in Paris. The judgment of some of their famous critics was extremely favourable. Consequently he came to have some faith in his own powers as an artist. He was asked what preliminary training he had received and his answer was that his training from childhood was in words, not in lines. He had an inborn sense of rhythm, even when he did not fully understand poetry. Verse, especially Sanskrit verse, had an intense fascination for him, and since then, as they knew, he had been doing nothing better than turning out verse, a task in which he found a deep sort of ecstasy. Only those creations of the poet or of the artist had a right to survive which had their proper balance, for inter-relation was a principle of creation. He might be told that some of the pictures before them were weird; but, then, there were weird pictures in the history of creation. Camels were very weird; but in its own surroundings in the desert the camel was complete. He had found in his paintings a means for the expression of reality. His discovery of this medium had given him intense satisfaction and pride - a pride such as all artists should have in achievement. They would think that he grew more and more vain with the years; but he could plead the excuse that painting was new to him, that he had not yet grown used to, and hardened in, this form of expression.

DR. ARTHUR BAKE read a paper on Sir Rabindranath Tagore's influence on Indian music and said that his musical creations were practically unknown in Europe. The poet sang the words he wrote down, but was not able to fix the music. This was being done by his nephew, Dinendranath; but the Bengali system of notation was inadequate. Hence Tagore's work might get lost in large measure by lack of sufficient notation: Three to five years' steady work would be sufficient for saving this treasure for posterity.

6 June, 1930  
**THE FRIEND**  
 p517(W)

## TAGORE AT WOODBROOKE

### III

THE poet returned to Woodbrooke last Tuesday (27th), very tired after his stay in Oxford, where he had been delivering the Hibbert Lectures. His encouragement with the staffs of the Selly Oak Colleges had to be cancelled, by the doctor's orders, as it was imperative for Dr. Tagore to take all the rest possible before a very important engagement with a member of the Government in London on Friday.

However, a lantern lecture on the Poet's educational work at Santiniketan, Bengal, had been arranged for Thursday evening, in the George Cadbury Hall; and though the doctor would not hear of our guest giving the lecture himself, and insisted on his private secretary, Arian Williams (formerly a secretary of the British student Christian Movement) taking his place. He at last, somewhat reluctantly, consented to the Poet coming up the hill by car, appearing on the platform, and speaking for "a severely limited three minutes".

All that day, Dr. Tagore had been busy in bed drawing; and the result of the work had been eight pictures. He only began to draw a couple of years ago; but a highly successful exhibition of his drawings has just concluded in Paris, and one is to take place in Birmingham next week. His pictures are said by those who have seen them to be extremely interesting and very beautiful.

On Thursday evening the George Cadbury Hall was packed, with an audience chiefly drawn from Birmingham, as the students of the Colleges had been asked to be unselfish enough to remain away in order to leave room for others. The Poet appeared on the platform looking extremely thin and frail. His face indeed seemed almost transparent. When he began to speak, his voice was low and feeble, and he showed many signs of exhaustion. After a few sentences, however, his theme took hold of him. His voice increased remarkably in power; and he was soon

speaking with great weight, and at times with fire, and almost with vivacity.

He described to us first the evils of our present educational system, both in East and West, with its utilitarianism, its commercialisation, and its cheap and vast mass-production. He contrasted with this the ancient Eastern ideal of education, according to which the pupils became members of their guru's family, rendering him personal service in return for the teaching which they drink in from his lips. There was no question of cash or payment in this system; but it was rendered possible economically by the free-will offerings which were made by the rich and noble, and by ordinary house-holders also, to the teachers who conducted such *Ashramas*.

The poet passed on to a moving description of the sufferings of the country-people in Bengal. As he spoke of disease, lack of water, and poverty, his voice rang through the Hall, full of quiet strength; and his face seemed to shine with a prophetic fire. Again and again he uttered the words, "Service for the children of men"; it was easy to see how deeply the suffering of the poor and needy have come home to this great man's heart, and how eagerly he desires to alleviate them. He begged for an attitude of co-operation towards all agencies working for the benefit of the Indian peasantry; and told us how he could see a future in which science would be harnessed, by the goodwill of all mankind, to the great task of alleviating all such misery.

He told us that he had not spared himself in this cause; and this we knew to be true; for here was this frail old man in the midst of us, six thousand miles from his home, self-condemned to year after year of arduous wandering, in order that he may obtain the means of support the institution which he has founded as the best agency for helping the need of his fellow-countrymen.

There was no word of bitterness in all this long address, no criticism or blame of the Indian Government, or of any other institution or system, except man's low ideals of education. But every sentence seemed to be inspired by a profound and eminently sincere love for the needy and wretched, and by a sturdy belief that there are forces of goodwill both in East and West which may be called into active play in order that the need may be met, in a spirit both of freedom and of co-operation.

The poet spoke entirely without notes; and his address lasted for about an hour in all. It was a marvellous performance for a sick man; and probably no one who was there will ever forget either the figure before us on the platform, or the splendidly constructive and redemptive spirit of what he said.

But it was a grievous ordeal for the doctor who was responsible for Dr Tagore's appearing in good health in Whitehall at eleven the next morning. I was sitting next to him; and during the latter part of the address he was so concerned that I was expecting him at any moment to rise up, and say that it must stop. However, he refrained; and at the end the Poet did not seem any the worse for the wonderful piece of service which he had done for us.

Before leaving for London at an early hour on Friday morning, he gave unexpectedly a message of thankfulness for the sympathy and love which have been shown to him at Woodbrooke.

We hope that he will return next week.

Woodbrooke, 31 v., 1930 J.S.H

### TAGORE'S CONCLUDING WORDS IN YEARLY MEETING

A Friend who was present at the Saturday afternoon session and, seated in the gallery opposite the Clerk's table, took notes of "the very important words spoken by Tagore when he was taking leave." He writes: "After asking us to co-operate with his people in love, not in a spirit of bitterness and jealousy and hatred, and saying that he knew we were lovers of humanity, he added practically these words: 'I have not formulated in detail what shape this independence would take, but it will be a mutual agreement. It can never come from one of these parties but from two parties united.' He then made a reference to the American Colonies, and asked us to leave India to deal with the evils belonging to that country in her own way, as concerning her peoples alone."

7 June, 1930

**THE SPECTATOR**

p927(W)

### Indian Articles

We publish this week a brilliantly written article by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, who defines the fundamental issue of the Indian problem as one of moral strength or the mechanics of power. It is evident from this article, in spite of some sentences which are by no means hostile, that he misunderstands the aims of the British Empire in India. We may not persuade him that we are able to understand Indian aspirations, though an honest attempt is being made to do so, but we hope that he will believe that the motives of the British in India, in the past and to-day, are not as he represents them. Because we are convinced that only intelligent opinion based on understanding can cut the knot, we have arranged to publish regularly for a certain period from June 14th, a page which will be reserved for comment by writers qualified to speak for moderate Indian opinion.

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7 June, 1930

**THE SPECTATOR**

p932(W)

### India

#### An Appeal to Idealism

I FIND it difficult to do my duty to-day in a spirit of patience and calmness, and at the same time to do justice to the Indian cause, to myself and my friends in this country. For the atmosphere of mutual relationship between India and great Britain has grown dark with suspicion and suffering.

It is my desire in this article to write concerning a reconciliation between two peoples who for over a century have had a close connexion with each other, and yet are still separated by a moral distance more difficult to overcome than mountains and seas. In this sensitive age of new awakening, the human in us in India has felt the indignity and pain of being dealt with by an abstraction of

a government from across a dark chasm of impersonal aloofness, devoid of the light of imagination and the living touch of sympathy. This large gap in humanity has offered a breeding-place to a diseased political condition in our history that is crying for a cure. It can only be affected by a generous co-operation from both sides, by a union of minds which know how to make proper allowance for weakness in human nature, and at the same time maintain firm fight in it where it is great.

Our task is every day growing harder; for the situation is solely left in the hands of the politicians, who represent the organization and not the humanity of a people. And therefore my appeal to-day is to that idealism which has made English history glorious, and which must extend its glory in an alien country.

Once Asia in her spring time of exuberant life offered the world her spiritual ideals. To-day Europe in the illumination of her intellect has brought her science and also her spirit of service. But unfortunately she has not come to Asia to reveal the generosity of her civilization, but to seek an unlimited field for her pride and power, trying to make these things eternal. She has come with her need and not with her wealth; and therefore she has belied her own mission and used the truth itself for a utilitarian purpose of self-aggrandisement. In order to wake her up to her own responsibility Asia must refuse weakly to yield her contribution to the impious belief that dehumanized power can succeed for ever with the help of science.

The people of England appear doomed to remain ignorant of the true state of things that prevails to-day in India. For in critical times like these Governments which have their faith in the short cut of punitive force for the speedy solution of their problems become more afraid than their enemies themselves. And therefore they create in the surrounding air the smoke screens of obscurity and calumny in order to hide their own method of action and discredit that of their opponents. This has been amply proved in the late War. The organized power has, the organ of a magnified voice; but we who have no proper means of publicity nor the bond of kinship with the British people to make it easy for us to gain credence, must resignedly accept all misrepresentation as the bitterest part of our national penance, the unavoidable penance for our own long

history of weakness. Yet I cannot allow this occasion to pass by without declaring that with few exceptions, inevitable in the present atmosphere of panic and defiance, India in this trial has maintained her dignity of soul. Even through distortion and suppression of truth, and circulation of untruth with belated contradiction in small letters, the fact glimmers out that our people, with a pious determination, has kept unshaken the difficult ideal which they have accepted from their great leader Mahatma Ghandi, who upholds the noblest spirit of India, the spirit of Buddha himself. To us who are away from our homes there has reached the voice of the sufferers across the barriers of silence and the sea, carrying above the smothered cry of pain the exaltation of a fulfilled vow under extreme provocation. My prayer for my people is, not for the cessation of their suffering, but for the keeping up of their trust in the power of the human spirit which shows itself in all its might of truth among those who are physically weak; for we have both the occasion and the responsibility to prove this, not only on behalf of India, but of all humanity.

For the sake of justice I must declare that in such a conflict between an unarmed people and a government in possession of unlimited power of destruction, our sufferings would have been terribly greater under any imperialistic rulers other than the British; and the fact that our country even in her desperate effort of utter defiance should still feel resentful at the acts of injustice due to methods of coercion hastily improvised, is an evidence of her strong faith in the standards of justice and humanity possessed by the British nation. It also shows our lack of direct experience of any great political revolution. In fact, if the lesson of history must be acknowledged, our people should never murmur against violence on the part of their rulers when normal conditions of government have been upset. We must expect this and face it, and never complain and blame the government for the drastic measures which we have deliberately made inevitable, while fully, I hope, anticipating the consequence. To light the fire and then complain that it burns is absurdly childish. And, therefore, we should, in all fairness, take upon ourselves the ultimate responsibility of the flogging and shooting, of injuries and indignities, of indiscriminate methods of

striking terror into the hearts of a helpless multitude and of the awful fact that the majority of victims must necessarily be innocent in a catastrophic outrage of this nature. None of us can cowardly claim immunity or mitigation of suffering when, even if rashly, the subversive forces of history have been brought down upon our country in the hope of building her history upon a new foundation.

The only thing which is most important for us to remember is that we should heroically uphold our own Dharma and refuse to accept defeat by offering violence in return.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

*13 June, 1930*

**THE FRIEND**

p552 & 553(W)

[From p552]

### **RACIAL RELATIONS**

#### **A MESSAGE FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE TO THE RACIAL COMMISSION OF THE UNIVERSAL RELATIONS PEACE CONFERENCE**

I regard the race and colour prejudice which barricades human beings against each other as the greatest evil of modern times, which should be overcome if humanity must be realised as one in spirit.

The different paths along which progress may be made towards recovery from this evil are manifold. My own stress would be laid upon the elevation of the public mind and the collection and dissemination of accurate scientific knowledge as against the pseudo-science and pseudo-religion which in their disguise of truth are treacherously dealing mortal blows to truth herself.

There should be a united effort to combine the emotional forces of religion, in its broadest sense, with the spread of education based on fully ascertained truth concerning the human race as a whole.

*June 5, 1930* **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

[From p553]

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE AT WOODBROOKS

### IV

OUR guest returned to Woodbrooke for a couple of days this week, in order, amongst other duties, to be present at the opening of the exhibition of his drawings in the Birmingham Corporation Art Gallery.

### The Exhibition of Drawings

There are about 170 of these drawings now on exhibition, all executed within a space of a little more than two years. The first of the series is a manuscript, in the poet's own fine and delicate handwriting, in which the erasures have been joined together by curved lines, so as to make up graceful and fantastic shapes. From this beginning we see the evolution of a highly distinctive technique, as we follow the series of drawings. At first their creator seems to be expressing upon paper that sense of mystical rhythm, essentially peaceful and at the same time radiant with an other-worldly beauty, with which we are already familiar from the study of his poems. A distinguished French art critic, writing of the exhibition of Rabindranath Tagore's drawings recently concluded at the Galerie Pigalle in Paris, says of them that the artist has merely been aiding in the birth of lines of which he knew nothing, and which were waiting to be born in the particular space in which, through his creative sympathy, they now appear. "All these shapes are like so many little souls which expect their salvation from his, and which he has to lead to their fruition."

The justice of this appreciation of Tagore as artist must be readily recognised by anyone giving serious attention to these most interesting drawings. They continually remind one of the drawings of William Blake (the authorities of the art Gallery have very wisely placed some of Blake's drawings in the same room for comparison). Yet, if a rash judgment may be permitted, they strike one immediately as much less sensuous, more ethereal, than Blake's work. At the same time they are not efforts

at the delineation of psychological states as is so much modern expressionist art. They are the pinning-down to paper, not of feeling, or emotion, but of pure essential harmony. They are the melody of Tagore's poetry and Tagore's music (for it must be remembered that Tagore was a great musician before he was a great poet) expressed in line. They produce upon the mind a very vivid impression of the fixation, materialisation, manifestation (ugly and odious terms!) of ideal beauty.

What has just been said applies chiefly to the earlier drawings, that is, to those executed towards the end of 1928 and the first part of 1929 (the drawings are arranged in the gallery in the order in which they were produced). Later, Tagore has become more of a representational artist, though still a very unconventional one. Many of the drawings representing animals and human faces or figures are almost grotesque. Some of them, one may imagine, were produced for the amusement of his small grandchildren. They certainly amused my small children, whom I took to see them; but I confess that I personally found them much less interesting and stimulating than the earlier work. The beauty of untrammelled line, which is so marked a feature of the 1928 drawings, reappears, however, in a few landscapes executed in the present year.

The art critic of the *Birmingham Mail* has been greatly impressed by Tagore's use of colour, and comments on the 'astounding power' shown in his deep tones and harmonious sequences. The colours employed are entirely coloured inks.

### The Poet Interprets Himself

The Poet himself, in talking of the way in which he had been led to take up this form of creative workmanship, spoke somewhat as follows to a group around him in the Gallery on the opening day "When the scratches in my manuscript cried, like sinners, for salvation, and assailed my eyes with the ugliness of their irrelevance, I often took more time in rescuing them into a merciful finality of rhythm than in carrying on what was my obvious task. In the process of this salvage work I came to discover one fact, that in the universe of forms there is a perpetual activity of natural selection in lines, and only the fittest survives which has in itself the fitness of a cadence; and I felt that to

solve the unemployment problem of the homeless heterogeneous into an inter-related balance of fulfilment, is creation itself. My pictures are my versification in lines. If by chance they are entitled to claim recognition, it must be primarily for some rhythmic significance of form which is ultimate, and not for any interpretation of idea or representation of a fact." These striking words have been reproduced in the pamphlet issued concerning the exhibition.

He also laid emphasis upon his delight in finding this way of reaching the manifestation of beauty through art: and upon his conviction that each beautiful thing, however tiny and obscure, has in itself an eternal value and significance, so that one single beautiful line is in itself a worthy and unique act of creation.

### **The Divine Sculptor and His Material**

Yesterday, in the Woodbrooke devotional meeting, the Poet spoke of the fact that there is in the personality of each one of us a certain hard and stubborn element. This is exactly that quality which makes it possible that the Divine Sculptor should carve from this hard material an ideal humanity in us. Often His chisel upon our lives cuts deeply, in pain and adversity; but as we are faithful to our times of meditation and prayer, the Divine workmanship goes forward in us.

On another occasion he spoke of the beauty of Japanese rooms, a beauty which seemed to him to be largely due to their emptiness: and he urged his hearers that they should take pains to make their lives empty enough for the Divine beauty to be shown in them.

### **"An International Stomach."**

On Thursday he attended the weekly staff lunch of the Selly Oak Colleges, in the George Cadbury Hall, and spoke to us informally afterwards regarding his educational ideals. We were interested to notice that our guest was not a vegetarian. Indeed he seemed to partake with relish of our cold tongue! This led on to his speaking of the value of possessing what he called 'an international stomach!' and he told us how Willie Pearson, his colleague and helper at Santiniketan, had been famous for this very desirable possession.

On one occasion, in the far East, Willie had gone methodically through a Chinese dinner, given in the Poet's honour, consisting of 25 very exotic dishes! This faculty was a real international asset.

### **Tyranny of the Examination System**

The Poet spoke of the disastrous methods of cramming, and of the tyranny of the examination system, in university education in modern India, and of his desire that his work of Santiniketan might some day result in the creation of an entirely independent Women's university, which should be free from these handicaps.

Finally - and the observation may well end these records of an unforgettable series of visits from a great Prophet and Creator of beauty - our guest said to us, "International co-operation is not merely a means; it is an end-in-itself."

*Woodbrooke, 6 vi., 1930*

J. S. H.

*14 June, 1930*

**THE SPECTATOR**

p986(W)

### **Section: Some Book of the Weeks**

With India so much in the foreground of affairs to-day, *The Political Philosophy of Rabindranath*, by Mr. Sochin Sen (Asker and Co., Calcutta, Rs. 2.8), might profitably be studied, for the poet laureate of Bengal is frank in his avowal of the faults of his countrymen, and equally explicit in his detestation of British rule in India. Such plain speaking all round might serve to clear the air, if it were really to the point, but we felt that in this instance the British reader will not really gather what the poet's ideals are. This, however, is not a criticism of Dr. Tagore, but rather a statement of the inevitable divergence between Eastern and Western outlook. Many interpreters have tried and will try again to explain the difficulties, and books such as this, sympathetically read, will do their share in showing where the races can help each other and where they must agree to differ. But we wish there had been fewer misprints; it is only human to be irritated by such things and to feel that a people that cannot trouble about punctuation are

likely to stumble in other ways. But that, again, is certainly not Dr. Tagore's fault.

14 June, 1930

**THE SPECTATOR**

p975(W)

**Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**(To the Editor of the SPECTATOR)**

SIR, - May I congratulate the *Spectator* on publishing Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's eloquent appeal to idealism as the only basis on which British-Indian relations can be put on a satisfactory footing?

I do not think you are altogether justified, however, in stating that Dr. Tagore "misunderstands the aim of the British Empire in India", for in his article he frankly states that "our sufferings would have been terribly greater under any imperialistic rulers other than the British".

Surely, this autumn, if the best minds in Great Britain and India can be brought to bear on the problem of working out a satisfactory scheme of Indian self-government within the British Commonwealth, the task should not prove insuperable. In the meantime contrilutions like Dr. Tagore's are very helpful in enabling us in Great Britain to see things from the Indian standpoint.

What a relief it is to turn to the columns of the *Spectator* after reading the articles now appearing in certain widely circulating daily papers in this country which approach the problem of India from the standpoint of Great Britain's profit and loss! - I am, Sir, & c.

**ENGLISHMAN.**

21 June, 1930

**THE SPECTATOR**

p1001(W)

**INDIA**

**(To the Editor of the SPECTATOR)**

SIR, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore may comfort himself with the reflection that there is no lack of ide-

alists in England and that all Englishmen who know and love India sympathize with India's aspirations after self-government. How beautiful it would be if all the peoples of India could live harmoniously together in Arcadian simplicity, forsaking crowded cities, banishing politicians and agitator, shedding for ever all racial and communal hatred and worshipping the one God and Father of us all, whether invoked in the name of Christ or Krishna!

But the musings of an idealist are apt to be broken into by the hard facts of life's realities. This is as true in India as elsewhere. Practical situations have to be faced. How, for instance, are the thousands of young men with a Western education who are clamouring for the immediate grant of Dominion status (whatever that may involve) to be satisfied? Even if all the English in the Indian Civil Services were to be forthwith sent packing, there would not be enough jobs to go round among Indians and to please everybody. Also the morality of the public service must be kept pure and untainted if the public are to receive the impartial justice which is their due. Mr. Ranga Iyer, in his book entitled *India: Peace and War?* knowing his own countrymen, observes that Indian judges are apt to be "influenced" by those who appoint them. He recommends that in Native States European and I.C.S. judges should be preferred and he says that the presence of a strong Briton at the head of the judiciary will be an absolute necessity for some time to come. If this is the case under the *regime* of hereditary rulers, would not similar causes produce similar results if the judiciary in British India were placed under the absolute control of an Indian Minister unless he was a man possessing the highest standards of unswerving rectitude and freedom from nepotism?

It is also imperative that India's financial stability should be maintained by men of status through a rigorous check of all temptations to extravagance or remissions of taxation for sentimental reasons, as otherwise her credit will be impaired in the eyes of other nations of the world with whom she may wish to have dealings. Trade must continue and flourish without any impossible tariff barriers being raised against imports from Europe to gratify old feelings of racial spite or to benefit indigenous industries beyond the limit of such precaution as may be necessary for fostering struggling enterprise.

Indians must learn to trust each other in trade and government instead of trusting the Englishman only. Again, those English who have devoted their lives to the service of India in an administrative or military capacity and others who have given their treasure for the development of India's communications and the protection of the country from famine by irrigation works, must not be defrauded by the threatened repudiation of past obligations, as some Congress politicians seem inclined to advocate.

Lastly, India's soil must be protected with England's help from foreign aggression by more warlike and less peace-loving nations who might treat its inhabitants with less consideration than England has shown.

There are some of the difficulties in the path of India's progress towards self-government, and they can only be solved by mutual co-operation and good will on the part of Britons and Indians. Meanwhile idealists will need to be a little practical and Indians would do well to come to the approaching Round Table Conference with a frank submission of their claims and a readiness to explain how any objections that may appear to the courses proposed by them may be overcome, - I am, Sir, &c.,

CHARLES G. SPENCER.

28 June, 1930

THE SPECTATOR

p1050(W)

#### Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(To the Editor of the SPECTATOR)

SIR, - in your issue of June 7th you publish a very remarkable article by the Bengali poet philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, written in rolling periods of poetic eloquence, which impress one like solemn mournful music, say the Dead March in *Saul*.

But as I recover from the feelings of awed admiration he calls forth, must confess that the meaning of it all is anything but clear to the practical mind looking for a path to action.

After careful study of it all I gather than no exception can be taken to the nobility of the ven-

erable poet's aims and aspirations, but a great deal as to the soundness of his appreciation of the facts.

He deplores, as we all do, the want of understanding - what he calls the "moral distance" between the Indians and the British "peoples", after many years of close connexion, "leaving us in an atmosphere grown dark with suspicion and suffering". He describes feelingly the "pain and indignity felt in India at being dealt with by an abstraction of a government, from across a dark chasm of impersonal aloofness, devoid of the light of the imagination, and the loving touch of sympathy".

He "appeals to-day to England for that idealism which has made her history glorious", and "must extend its glory in an alien country". He deplores the fact "that the people of England are apparently doomed to remain ignorant of the true state of things that prevails in India", because "the Government bent on using the short cut of primitive force, creates smoke-screens of calumny and obscurity in the air, to hide their own methods of action",

He claims that, though the Indians must "re-signedly accept misrepresentations as the bitterest part of the national penance for their long history of weakness", "India in spite of panic and defiance has, in this trial maintained the dignity of her soul." and "kept unshaken the difficult ideal they have accepted from their great leader Gandhi". He acknowledges that "in a conflict between an unarmed people and a Government armed with unlimited power of destruction, our sufferings would have been terribly greater under any imperialistic rulers other than the British", and thinks that his country "still has strong faith in the standards of justice and humanity possessed by the British nation".

He also acknowledges that "his people should never grumble at violence on the part of their rulers when normal conditions have been upset". "To light the fire," he truly says, "and then to complain that it burns, would be absurdly childish". So far, as long as he keeps to theories and generalities, we may accept his views with a certain amount of sympathy.

But when he comes to describing as facts the evil deeds with which he credits the "satanic" Government, with its "short cut to primitive force, by means of a smoke-screen of misrepresentation of the truth and circulation of untruth", when he talks of "injus-

tice due to methods of conversion hastily improvised", of "floggings and shootings", of "injuries and indignities", of "indiscriminate methods of striking terror into the hearts of a helpless multitude", we who know the facts, and realize that, in truth, too much restraint and patience has been exercised against deliberate breakers of the law, we open our eyes in amazement that any sane man can cherish ideas so contrary to what has actually occurred.

Much blood *has* been shed, and much misery caused in India by the communal conflicts due to the lawlessness encouraged by Gandhi's preachings, in spite of the efforts made by the British Government to preserve the peace.

It is surely a misuse of words to talk of "repression" in connexion with the action taken to prevent deliberated breaches of the law. The burglar might as well complain of being repressed by the policeman. - I am, Sir, &c.,

**F.R. BAGLEY**

6 August, 1930

**THE TIMES**

p9c7(D)

#### **Section: TELEGRAMS IN BRIEF**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore arrived at COPENHAGEN yesterday on his way to Elsinore, where he is to lecture at the International High School.

30 August, 1930

**THE SPECTATOR**

p280(W)

#### **GREAT BRITAIN AND INDIA**

**(To the Editor of the SPECTATOR)**

SIR - A fact of very grave significance at the present crisis in the British rule in India has sorely puzzled my mind. I am impelled to write about it, for I find that its importance is not understood in England even by those who are in touch with Indian affairs.

At Dacca, in Eastern Bengal, there have been communal riots in which men of vicious character have been brought in, so as to increase the mischief, and unspeakable atrocities have occurred. Yet, according to reports which have reached me, the police have either stood idly by, or allowed the evil to go on with indifference and contempt. While the news of a motor accident in Europe causing a few casualties is circulated in all your newspapers, these crying evils continuing from day to day in the capital city of East Bengal whereby the whole neighbourhood was terrorised and all work paralysed have hardly found any mention in English journals. The number of deaths, the loss of property, the daily sufferings and terrors caused by these events have been enormous; and yet they have been ignored with strange and ominous silence. If a single Englishman were injured, or the comforts of English residents were menaced, such silence would hardly be kept. Is it any wonder, then, that we are led to regard ourselves as of no interest or importance in the eyes of the British people, who have taken upon themselves the gratuitous task of our trusteeship? Is it strange that we consider such silence as artificially imposed rather than naturally occurring?

We have not the least doubt that the most expensively and elaborately organized power which the British Government has in India is more than sufficient in checking at once any symptoms of violence in our communal relationship. We have been brought up for a long time past on this belief. What has now occurred at Dacca had happened in a somewhat similar manner a few years ago in Calcutta and had been loudly proclaimed in the English Press. What is remarkable in the present instance is that amid an almost complete silence in the British Press a state of anarchy continued in Dacca for an unconscionably long time. The opinion formed about this arresting silence by our own people is unlikely to be accepted by the people of England.

Here comes the real meaning of our helplessness. For the British people have their comfortable faith in that conduct of their own officials who rule over an alien people. They feel little direct responsibility. Therefore, when our evidence is pitted against that of their own official representatives, we have little chance of credence. Let us acknowledge that

this is natural; yet at the same time you should be allowed for the same reason to have faith in our own people when under conditions like the present they suffer and complain. For we are very unequally matched; and while your opinion vitally affects us at every point, our opinion may easily remain unnoticed or else be even suppressed by you. But silenced though our people may be and ineffectual in their struggle, we judge; and in the end it *does* matter. I know from my own correspondence that this event at Dacca has alienated, more than anything else in Bengal, the sympathies of those who were still clinging to their faith in British justice. Other happenings had shaken public confidence, but this has struck at its very foundation. - I am, Sir, &c.,

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

P.S. - For those of your readers who wish to study our own version of the story about this Dacca situation reference may be made to the *Modern Review* of June, 1930.

6 September, 1930

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EVENING TELEGRAPH**

p1c6(DE)

**Section : LONDON LETTER**

**Tagore for Russia**

THE long white beard and glowing brown eyes of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, have recently become a familiar sight at Geneva. He is the guest of a prominent English resident there who is much interested in theosophy and social questions. But Sir Rabindranath is leaving very shortly for Russia. He wishes to see something of the political and social conditions in that country.

Probably no poet has travelled so widely as this venerable Indian. He has lectured in almost all European Countries, he has toured Canada and United States, and the Far East. Though a land of violence and persecution, Russia seems no more to discourage him than did Italy.

11 September, 1930

**THE CHRISTIAN WORLD**

p3c5(W)

**Section: PERSONAL**

**Tagore to Visit Russia**

Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, after spending a strenuous time in Berlin, Vienna and Geneva is now proceeding to Russia to give a series of lectures there. The poet is being accompanied on this tour by Mr C. F. Andrews.

29 September, 1930

**THE TIMES**

p11c2(D)

**THE SOVIET EXECUTIONS  
DISAPPROVAL INSIDE RUSSIA**

**RIGA, SEPT. 28**

*Izvestia* on Friday published an appreciation of Soviet culture and methods alleged to have been written by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who has spent a fortnight in the U.S.S.R. Sir Rabindranath Tagore is reported to have said that his heart rejoices, and that he dreams that some day his country maybe admitted to blessings and emancipation of spirit such as people of the U.S.S.R. enjoy. *Izvestia* adds that Professor Einstein's daughter accompanied Sir Rabindranath Tagore, and that the parting with Soviet officials and writers was most cordial.

14 October, 1930

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p17c1-2(D)

**DR. TAGORE ON RUSSIA**

**An Appreciation and a Warning**

**EVILS OF VIOLENCE**

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, during his recent visit to Moscow, gave an interview to a reporter of the

"Izvestia", in which he gave his impressions of Moscow. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore said:

"I wish to let you know how deeply I have been impressed by the amazing intensity of your energy in spreading education among the peasant masses, the most intelligent direction you have given to this work, and also the variety of channels that have been opened out to train their minds and senses and limbs. I appreciate it all the more keenly because I belong to that country where millions of my fellow-countrymen are being denied the light that education can bring them. For human beings all other boons that are external and superficial, that are imposed from outside, are like paints and patches that never represent the bloom of health but only disguise the anaemic skin without enriching the blood. You have recognised the truth that in extirpating all social evils one has to go to the root, which can only be done through education and not through police batons and military brow-beating.

"But I find here certain contradictions to the great mission which you have undertaken. Certain attitudes of mind are being cultivated which are contrary to your ideal about the method of radical social improvement. I must ask you: Are you doing your ideal a service by arousing in the minds of those under your training anger, class hatred, and revengefulness against those whom you consider to be your enemies? True, you have to fight against tremendous obstacles, you have to overcome ignorance and lack of sympathy, and even persistently virulent antagonism. But your mission is not restricted to your own nation or your own party, but it is for the betterment of humanity according to your light. But does not humanity include those who do not agree with your aims? Just as you try to help peasants who have other ideas than yours about religion, economics, and social life, not be getting fatally angry with them but by patiently teaching them and showing them where the evil lurks in secret, should you not have the same mission to those other people who have other ideals than your own? These you may consider to be mistaken ideals, but they have all historical origin, and have become inevitable through combinations of circumstances. You may consider the men who hold them to be misguided. But it should all the more be your purpose to

convert them by pity and love, realising that they are as much a party of humanity as the peasants whom you serve.

### **"Be Great in Mercy"**

"If you dwell too much upon the evil elements of your opponents, assuming that those are inherent in their human nature, meriting eternal damnation, you inspire an attitude of mind which with its content of hatred and animosity may some day react against your own ideal and destroy it. You are working in a great cause. Therefore you must be great in your mind, great in your mercy, your understanding and your patience. I feel profound admiration for the greatness of the things you are trying to accomplish, and therefore I cannot help expecting for it a motive force of love and an environment of charitable understanding.

"There must be disagreement where minds are allowed to be free. It would be not only an uninteresting world but a sterile world of mechanical regularity if all of our opinions were forcibly made alike. If you have a mission which includes all humanity, for the sake of the living humanity you must acknowledge the existence of differences of temperament and of opinion. Opinions are constantly changed and rechanged through the free circulation of intellectual forces and moral persuasion. Violence begets violence and blind stupidity. Freedom of mind is needed for the reception of truth: terror hopelessly kills it. The brute cannot subdue the brute. It is only the man who can do it. This is being proved every day in our human history.

"Before leaving your country let me once again assure you that I am struck with admiration for all that you are doing to free those who were in slavery to raise up those who were lowly and oppressed, and to bring help to those who were utterly helpless, reminding them that the source of their salvation lies in a proper education and their power to combine their human resources.

### **A Legacy of Violence**

"For the sake of humanity I hope that you may never create a vicious force of violence, which will go on weaving an interminable chain of violence and cruelty. Already you have inherited much of

the worst legacy from the Czarist regime. It is the worst legacy you possibly could have. You have tried to destroy many of the other evils of that period. Why not try to destroy this one also? I have learned much from you, how skilfully you evolve usefulness out of the helplessness of the weak and ignorant. Your ideal is great, and so I ask you for perfection in serving it and a broad field of freedom for laying its permanent foundation".

The poet was asked to say, in conclusions, what institutions in Moscow had impressed him most.

He replied: "The orphans at the Home of the young Pioneers showed such confidence in their ability to realise their ideal for a new world. Their behaviour to me was so natural. Their conduct impressed me deeply. Then at the Peasants' House I met the peasants. We questioned each other quite frankly. Their problems are so similar to the problem of the peasants in my own country. I was deeply impressed by the attitude of mind of your peasants towards the methods you have evolved for solving these problems.

"Places which I have not been able to visit have been visited by my secretaries. My doctor tells me of the fine work you are doing in sanitation, hygiene, scientific research. You are accomplishing a great deal in these lines, under conditions not nearly as favourable, economically at least, as in other countries. My secretaries tell me of your splendid work in training students of agriculture, in caring for and training the homeless children left by war and famine, and of the outstanding experiment in practical education being carried on by Mr. Shatsky in his colony. Mr. Shatsky did me the honour of coming to visit me.

I find that the ideal of his institution I also share. I am certain that your methods of education would be of great benefit in other countries, where there is so much in education that is merely academic and abstract. Yours is much more practical, and therefore truly moral, and it is closer in touch with the varied aspects and purposes of life".

## RUSSIA AND INDIA

In a speech delivered at the Dom Soyuzoff, Moscow, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore said:

"I believe that all human problems find their fundamental solution in education. And outside of my own vocation as a poet I have accepted this responsibility to educate my people as much as it

lies in my individual power to do. I know that all evils, almost without exception, from which my land suffers are solely owing to the utter lack of education of the people.

"Poverty, pestilence and communal fights and industrial backwardness, which make our path of life too narrow and perilous are simply owing to the meagerness of education. You all know that our condition in India is very similar to yours. She has an agricultural population which is in need of all the help and encouragement that you have accorded to this country. You know how precarious is the living which exclusively depends upon agriculture, and, so how utterly necessary it is for the cultivators to have the education, the up-to-date method of producing crops in order to meet the increasing demands of life and of expensive government.

"Our people are living on the verge of perpetual famine, and do not know how to help this because they have lost their faith and confidence in their own humanity. This is the greatest misfortune of that people, over 300,000,000 of men and women burdened with profound ignorance, a closed prospect, and incompetence.

## Changed Mental Attitude

"So I came to this land to see how you deal with this problem, you who have struggled against the incubus of ignorance, superstition, and apathy, which were once prevalent in this oppressed land among the working men and peasantry. The little that I have seen has convinced me of the marvellous progress that has been made, the miracle that has been achieved. How the mental attitude of the people has been changed in such a short time it is difficult for us to realise, we who live in the darkest shadow of ignorance and futility. It gladdens my heart to know that the people, the real people who maintain the life of society, bear the burden of civilisation, are not deprived of their own rights and that they enjoy an equal share of all the advantages of a progressive community.

"And I dream of the time when it will be possible for that ancient land of Aryan civilisation to enjoy the great boon of education and equal opportunity for all the people. I am thankful, truly thankful to you all, who have helped me in visualising in a concrete form the dream which I have

been carrying for a long, long time in my mind, the dream of emancipating the peoples' mind, which has been shackled for ages. For this I thank you".

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21 October, 1930

**THE TIMES**

p14c6(D)

**SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE ILL IN UNITED STATES**

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

NEW YORK, Oct. 20

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who arrived in the United States a week ago and was on the point of setting out on a lecture tour of the country, was found by the doctor who examined him yesterday to be suffering from heart disease so severely that complete rest is essential. He has therefore, cancelled his tour and will return to India as soon as his health permits. He is at present staying with Dean Ladd, of Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut.

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21 October, 1930

**THE FRIEND**

p971(W)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE: A PROPOSAL**

**To the Editor of The Friend**

DEAR FRIEND - The recent visit to this country of the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, has been welcomed by all who value sympathetic and cultural relations between East and West. He is himself the most distinguished representative of Indian culture in the literature of our day, and his life work - the founding of the International University at Santiniketan has been an embodiment of a desire which he expressed some years ago "that the mind of India should join its forces to the great movement of mind which is in the present day world". Of the university he says: "We invite students and scholars from different parts of the world to an Indian University, to meet there our own students and scholars in a spirit of collaboration".

We are sure that there are many who, like ourselves, feel that a debt of gratitude is owing to him, and would be glad of an opportunity to express this in a practical way by helping the work of the University.

With this object a fund is being raised, to which all well-wishers of the work done at Santiniketan are invited to contribute. It is hoped that the fund may be completed before the poet returns to India. Contributions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, R.O. Mennell, Woden Law, Kenley, Surrey. - We are, etc.,

**A.M.DANIEL** (Director of the National Gallery).

**S. MARGERY FRY** (J.P., M.A., Principal of Somerville College, Oxford).

**LAURENCE HOUSMAN.**

**A.D. LINDSAY** (C.B.E., LL.D., Master of Balliol College, Oxford).

**JOHN MASEFIELD** (Poet Laureate).

**MARIAN E. PARMOOR.**

**WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN** (M.A., Principal of the Royal College of Arts, South Kensington).

**MICHAEL E. SADLER** (K.C.S.I., Master of University College, Oxford).

**C.P. SCOTT (LL.D).**

**H.R.L. SHEPPARD** (C.H., D.D., M.A., Dean of Canterbury).

**EDWARD J. THOMPSON** (M.A., Ph.D., M.C.).

**EVELYN UNDERHILL.**

**EVELYN WRENCH**

**FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND** (K.C.S.I., LL.D., D.Sc).

October 20th, 1930.

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15 November, 1930

**THE SPECTATOR**

p724(W)

**Letters to the Editor**

**• THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE**

(To the Editor of the SPECTATOR)

SIR, - I have often been asked to give my opinion about Mahatma Gandhi's rejection of the invitation

to the Round Table Conference because his terms were found impossible to be at once accepted by the British Government. I am not competent to discuss this question from a narrowly political point of view, though I am sure it has another perspective of meaning which need serious consideration.

Through the blinding mist of the past the time is struggling to appear when people's destinies are no longer to be moulded and modelled by the politicians who are the modern medicine men of diplomacy. The collaboration of the world mind is daily acquiring a supreme value for all important national problems, and the centre of gravity is shifting itself from the exclusive conference of national interest to the conference of moral judgment of all nations. Every day the idea is growing clearer in our minds that the affairs which once were jealously considered as special to one's own country do concern all humanity when they comprehend moral issues. The potent force of public opinion has already extended its field of activity across all political barbed wire fences of individual countries, and the human world is rapidly developing its universal organ of voice and sense of hearing to a very high degree of sensitiveness.

This has generated a power which national organizations of all free countries are busily exploiting for their own interest with the help of a large expenditure and often of unscrupulous means and messengers. We have seen how in the late War, while the manufacture of the poison gas which has its range of mischief only within the battle-field was not neglected, dissemination of poisonous slanders was also carried on far and wide with lavish extravagance. The instruments of propaganda have become today a permanent political necessity, not only for informing the world of facts, but also deluding it; and insinuations against their rivals and victims are sown broadcast by governments through the agencies that seem inoffensive and camouflage that has the appearance of moderation and fairness.

But all this has a great meaning proving that our history has come to a stage when moral force has to be acknowledged even by politics and be captured at any cost, even at the cost of truth. This fact is all the more remarkable because the efficiency of the physical and material power has, in this present scientific age, attained a degree of virulent perfection never before achieved. And yet

this power hesitates to-day to assert its unashamed supremacy except in rare cases of short-sighted stupidity and fanatical barbarism. The necessity to give a dog a bad name and then to hang it certainly proves a higher moral spirit than the defiant spirit that allows a dog to be hanged without the accompaniment of a libelous justification.

The invitation to a Round table Conference accorded to the representatives of a people who can with perfect impunity be throttled into silence or trampled into a pulp, is in itself a sign of the time undreamt of even in half a century ago. Mahatma Gandhi may not believe in the success of its obvious purpose, but he must acknowledge that it represents the same moral principle which he himself invokes on behalf of his countrymen in their endeavour after self-government. The real importance of this Conference is not in the opportunity it may offer of a cooperation with the British politicians, but with the soul force of the whole world. We must know that this Conference is going to hold its sittings before the world-tribunal whose approbation it is eager to win.

When the continents began to be formed on the geography of the earth the amount of the land was insignificant, as it were, contemptuously tolerated by the all-pervading reign of the sea which kicked it and nearly smothered it under an engulfing protection. But those very uncertain points of concession, scarcely solid, were significant of a fruitful future. We human beings have the cause to be thankful for that precarious geological small favour, surrounded by unfathomable restrictions. And to-day, when on the one hand the police batons are bloodily busy cracking our unresisting heads and admiringly defended by authorities, majestically aloof from the tragic scene, a beckoning gesture from the other shore has reached the disarmed multitude of India, denuded of educational facilities, in the shape of an invitation to a Conference. I do not know if it is too small or ineffectual, but there is no doubt that it is a moral gesture, the gesture inspired not merely by the political necessity but the necessity of a world sanction. And I believe that it would have been worthy of Mahatma Gandhi if he could have accepted unhesitatingly the seat offered to him even though the conditions were not fully acceptable to himself. To come there without any absolute assurance of political success would all the more

enhance the significance of his moral mission. God's great boons come humbly through small openings, and we on our part should be humble when we hail them, trust them, and by our own merit make them bear the best fruits. The gifts that have any real value claim for their perfection our own faith and sacrifice.

This present age waits for a new and a noble technique for all reparations of national maladjustments. Mahatma Gandhi is the one man in the present age who has preached it and shaped it through his movement of non-violent resistance in South Africa and India. And now he has had the opportunity to introduce the moral spirit of that movement into a Conference which only he has made compellingly possible, and which only he could have used as a platform wherefrom to send his voice to all those over the world who truly represent the future history of man, a history that has to be built upon the foundation of numerous immediate failures and futile sufferings. Any such Conference can never be from the beginning a ready-made apparatus into whose rigid narrowness one must squeeze and torture oneself for accommodation. It waits for a man of genius, as he surely is, to turn it into an instrument for giving expression to the spirit of the age in the field of political intercommunication. I feel sad that such an opportunity has been lost for the moment, for India and for all the world. For to-day is the age of co-operation in all departments of life, including politics, the age of the creation of the continent in which all the human islands are to merge their isolation for a grand festival of civilization.

But here are my pen stops, for I have suffered, and my sufferings has been too cruel and too recent for me to leave it aside and think of a millennium that is still remote. I have known what has been done in Dacca, and from the light of that I can read the story of the Peshawar tragedy.

These people, the rulers of the world, are afraid of the judgment of their own peers, but are not afraid of the suffering caused by themselves. The time made safe for the weak will be slow in its journey through a long moral path which is still in the making. In the meanwhile the mothers' tears are flowing in our neighbourhood, and the wretched dumbness of the desolated homes is a burden we find difficult to remove from our hearts. There are wounds that cry for the

immediate healing of their pain, and I am silenced by my own shame as I try to talk of an age when the tedious ceremony of exorcism is completed by which the devil is made to slink away for his own safety and self-interest. Those of our brothers who have suffered, till their hearts are ready to break, cry to me angrily: "Stop that discussion about the future; it is natural and therefore healthy for us to struggle through the process of the suffering which we have undertaken on our own soil, and instead of appealing to the world to take our side, let us, unarmed and resource less, stand up and defy the mighty power and say: "We fear thee not. We do need redress of our wrongs, but we need even more our self-respect which nobody outside our own selves can restore to us.""

I do not know how to answer them, and say to myself, "Possibly they are wiser with natural wisdom of the sufferer."

It was the great personality of Mahatma Gandhi which inspired this courage, under persecutions frankly brutal and cowardly insidious, into the heart of the dumb multitude of India, suffering for ages from the diffidence of their own human power. I myself have too often doubted the possibility of such a sudden quickening of life in a country whose mind has remained parched under a long drought of education. But a miracle has happened through the magical touch of Mahatma's own indomitable spirit and his courageous faith in human nature. And after this experience of mine I hesitate to doubt his wisdom when he holds himself aloof from the invitation that seems to offer the opportunity for at least the beginning of an endeavour which, through the usual path of diplomacy, with its tortuous bends and sudden pitfalls of reactions, may at last lead us to our goal. Let me believe in his firmness of attitude, and not in my doubts - I am, Sir, &c.,

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

*(Although we do not share all Rabindranath Tagore's views, we welcome his outspoken letter. We are sure that it correctly represents views widely held in India. At this moment it is of the utmost importance that we, in Great Britain, should recognize the need for making a supreme effort to win Indian belief in our good faith. - ED Spectator.)*

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22 November, 1930  
**THE SPECTATOR**  
 p774-776(W)

### India and "Bengal Lancer"

By **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

I HAVE just finished reading almost in one sitting the book of a Bengal Lancer\*, and feel that it is one of the most remarkable books in modern literature. We are too familiar with the writings dealing with secret knots and distortions in sex psychology, jarring notes of nerves gone out of tune, futile struggles of human will against inheritance or inherent self-antagonism. But I have known no other instance of a genuine psychological record of any intimate touch of a Western mind with the mind of the East, a record of reactions much more deeply fundamental and interesting in its subtleties than the pathological convulsions of passions and prejudices. We have seen numerous criticisms of the eastern life from the Western sources, some honest and some otherwise, some cruelly smart and some insipid-bird's-eye views of living human truths which the bird's eye can never reach misrepresentations owing to supercilious incompetence of deliberate malice. This book contains the expressions of personal experiences of a sensitive mind without any intrusion of the schoolmaster or of "our own correspondent," or the tract society artist with his traditional orient of palm trees, panthers and pythons.

When I mention "Orient" in connexion with this book I mean India, which lies in the middle of sharply divided Asia - the Semitic West and the Mongolian and Polynesian East. I have read in a book of travels a remark made by a well-known English thinker according to which India is the only country that belongs to the East. The implication is that India is the only country in the whole world which is incomprehensible to the Western mind. I cannot ignore the testimony of a man like him, and I sympathize with his bewilderment. The western humanity has a similarity of temperament with the Semitic West in its spirit of fight, in the aggressive pride of its power and possession, and its God who relentlessly jealous of his authority. The West finds no difficulty in paying homage to the Christ who is the representative Spirit of

the East, the victorious spirit of the Meek, because it does not feel the necessity to follow Him.

This Semitic Asia has been a close neighbour of Rome, and it cultivated the organization of forces with the same impulse for world dominion. The aspiration of life which it cherishes has hardly any touch of metaphysics in it; it grew up out of the nomadic scrimmage for space and pasture, and an urgent necessity for plunder. We have repeatedly been told that Englishmen have a strong preference for Mohammedan; it is quite natural that they should understand him and therefore like him, for in some way he belongs to the twilight fringe of the West, where the light may be dimmer but the atmosphere and temperature are the same. On the other side in Japan and China, which the author above mentioned visited, they have something of Greece in their aesthetic sense of perfection in its definite proportionateness, and also their pragmatic spirit which hardly allows any mysticism to tinge their mental horizon and create phantoms to distract them in the forward path of their life.

But India is the land of the incoherently miscellaneous - a wilderness of creeds and customs and superstitions that rudely challenge the attention of the traveller with a medley of inconsistencies which, like facts in a dream, find their equal right to exist without any refutation or even the mildest opposition of a surprise. No doubt, all religions carry their burden of incongruities, paradoxes that are unaware of their crude absurdities, ugliness or even immoral implications. For religions have their preservation plots where infantile memories of the race are piously sheltered and logic is forbidden to ask for their documents of adult citizenship. They are freely allowed to carry their ragged bundles containing fragments of the dismembered dead, useless and insanity. Unfortunately, religions are too numerous in India with their hoardings that are like the pocket of a child, perfectly indiscriminate in its contents. This has produced an ethnological puzzle and a social and political conundrum in our country.

But one has to keep in his mind that this impossible jumble has not been India's own creation, just as no party is responsible for the bewildering variety of races in the world, producing painful tangles in man's history that are full of physical and moral menace. This is a fact given to her from the prehistoric period of her social evolution. It is a problem which her own civilization was compelled from the very first to solve

\* Bengal Lancer. By F. Yeats-Brown. (Gollancz.)

in order to prove her human worth - the problem of heterogeneity. Possibly other ancient civilizations like those of Greece and Rome had a similar task which they vigorously simplified by forcible elimination. Whenever something like the same problem still persists in the modern age, as it does on a smaller scale in the United States, and also in South Africa, the difficulty goads the people to barbarity, - the very people who feel exultantly superior when they talk about the cast distinctions prevailing in India.

After a preliminary struggle for the Aryan supremacy India accepted in her hospitable soil the fact of the race variety. Very likely it was inevitable, for the invading immigrants were small in number and some parts of the original inhabitants were not inferior to them in the progress of their social organization. But such acceptance meant toleration of an endless miscellany of creeds and cultures not in harmony with the newcomers' own tradition or temperament. A most desperate struggle went on for centuries - not the physical struggle for race survival of a superior culture in spite of its very heavy load of alien accumulations.

The unavoidable problem involved made the Aryan mind to think. I am sure it was felt that the very small minority represented by the invaders could save their own spirit from being dragged down underneath the mass of foreign matter, desultory and discordant, if only they could evolve a comprehensive philosophy which would find into a harmonious unity the facts that are alien and irrelevant and yet at the same time would transcend them. It is unnecessary to say that these people did not deliberately sit down to construct a system of thought that would save their mind from being smothered into depredation. Their subconscious activity was constantly roused by the utter necessity of the circumstance. And they said: "Differences are only in the appearance which is *maya* but in their essence all things are one; that in reality there is nothing but Brahma, the infinite, and multitude is only in the seeming."

In most other countries philosophy gives expression and exercise to the intellectual mind and only indirectly influences our actions, but in India it has had its practical purpose. For when she had to submit inevitably to the evasion of the swarming *many*, and to accommodate them in her own social organism, her most desperate struggle was not against foreign attacks but against the inner elements of disharmonies. And she said: "I accept all things., I do not fight against them, and my mission for ever will be to find myself

in them and beyond them, for in the perfect spiritual comprehension of the soul is my true freedom." Those who are no true travellers but born tourists, who come from outside and care not to go in, whose method of lightening their own burden is the scientific method of external pruning and extermination, leaving the inner roots to perpetuate entanglements, have only the eyes to see the crowd of facts in India, some unsavoury, some unmeaning, insanitary and abnormal, disjunct and disproportionate; but they cannot see the subtle and all-pervading brooding truth over them, the eternal spirit of India, ever trying to save things that are condemned by laying emphasis upon some meaning which remains vague in them, and which with the growth of its clearness transforms them from the unreal into reality.

The doctrine of the unity of Man, the transcendental unity of all things, is not unknown to other parts of the world, but in India it is not a mere doctrine to be logically pursued but truth that for one's salvation has to be realized and be made more indubitably evident than things that are seen touched. The process is called "Yoga," in which man's psychology and physiology have allied themselves into a perfect power of illumination for India. The infinite which is the supreme spirit of unity is not for the mathematical reasoning but for the liberation of consciousness in the individual which is considered by our people as the final goal of Man. This realm of aspiration, of the ultimate spiritual endeavour in India, is even more difficult to approach than the South pole when essayed by the smart tourist, who only has the time and power to taste the cocoanut by licking its skin and exulting over the superiority of his own hedge in a sumptuous book of travel.

But the "Bengal Lancer" has shown the daring of mind and the true spirit of adventure by approaching the most difficult frontier of that India, which is not the British India nor the geographical India. He has occasionally stumbled into some minor technical errors, some slips in typography which pedants take special pleasure in exposing but he has felt truth as a consummate artist who can see what is significant behind the screening crowd of the non-essential and expressed the unutterable mystery of it in a language which is as quick with life's fire as his own beautiful Arab steed, and as responsive to his slightest gesture as that former companion of his barrack life.

A perfect perspective of his self-portrayal has been

opened through the beginning of his chapters in that fateful border of India where the Aryan immigrants commenced their own history in that land. The picture of his young life, rude and adventurous, his enjoyments, which had their source in a turbulent animal spirit, constant preparedness for military enterprises, spending days and nights near dangers prowling in ambuscade, had some analogy with the life of that vigorous race in their youth inebriated with a reckless confidence in their victorious destiny. He, like them, was not overmuch troubled in the beginning with the spirit's inner questionings, but only with the surging of an exuberant vitality. Then the stream of events deepened and widened and descended towards the Gangetic valley where King Janaka once meditated and taught the cult of Brahma, and Buddha taught the uttermost extinction of self in the spirit of love that is measureless. These belong to the deathless profundity of truth, compared to which the rise and fall of empires are mere bubbles, the spirit of which is still brooding in India's patient and plaintive atmosphere over the ever-revolving circles of self-devouring futilities, the driftings of history that rock on the waves for a time and then disappear in the abyss. This British soldier came and gazed on its serenity and questioned it. The silence baffled him but did not repel; for it will ever remain with him and whisper to him in his solitude, *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* - "All that there is is one with Brahma."

This great utterance was radiated forth from the utter bliss of an illuminated realization on a day that had dawned in a forest shade in India. That day ever remains undated; that forest has vanished like the scribblings of a child on its slate carelessly wiped away the next moment. Since that day, along the red dusty road of centuries soldiers of wild tribes marched to conquer, adventurers to seek their fortune, the kings to reign, and while they felt secure of an eternity of wealth and glory their power faded like the flaming colour from the sunset clouds, but through the silence of countless starry nights and dew bathed mornings over this tragic land of a variegated destiny still are chanted the same immortal words: "*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*." And by the same red road of time, trampled by triumphant power and pride and pilgrims seeking wisdom and peace, the swarm of tourists will raise the dust and pass on to oblivion chattering and gossiping, taking notes of innumerable details while ignoring the one voice of the ancient prayer that brings out from all imperfections an eternal movement of redemption, a ceaselessly evolving meaning - the prayer: "Lead me from the unreal to Reality, make clear in me thy manifestation" - the prayer that is ever working even from the unconscious depths of those tourist minds as well as in all failures that are crude, crooked and stupid

**1931**

*8 January, 1931*

**GLASGOW DAILY RECORD AND MAIL**

p11c5(D)

**Section: THIS MORNING'S GOSSIP**

### **Tagore and Hearst**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, at present in London, has been telling his friends that the greatest surprise he received during his visit to New York was occasioned by reading what Mr. W. R. Hearst, the newspaper owner, had to say about him. Hearst has had many caustic things to say about the way Britain handles her Empire but in the present instance he chose another line.

### **Changed Tune**

Tagore, he wrote, had "colossal nerve" to forget that "his own India is kept from going to complete smash only by power and the justice of Britain". The poet, of course, is an Indian Nationalist and it must have been galling to receive such criticism from a quarter he thought would yield help.

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*9 January, 1931*

**DAILY SKETCH**

p19c3(D)

### **SHAW MEETS TAGORE**

#### **"We are the Voices Crying in the Wilderness"**

Two great writers met at a London hotel yesterday. Both were tall and towered over the heads of those around them. The white beard of one was trimly cut; that of the other flowed over his robe in patriarchal fashion.

One was George Bernard Shaw, and the other Rabindranath Tagore.

They were the guests of honour at a home of the All People's Association, and the great Indian

teacher had just finished an impassioned speech, pleading for universal brotherhood, when Bernard Shaw was brought forward to greet him.

With his characteristic warmth, Shaw took both Tagore's hand and shook them. "That was wonderful," he said.

"Will it do any good?" asked Rabindranath.

Shaw shook his head. "We are the voices crying in the wilderness, you and I," he said.

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*9 January, 1931*

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p4c4(D)

### **DR. TAGORE HOLDS "COURTS" A London Reception**

### **CULTURAL BONDS OF EAST AND WEST**

#### **The International Mind**

**(From our London Staff.)  
Fleet Street, Thursday.**

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore is spending a few days in England on his way to India after his lecturing tour in America. This evening a reception was given in his honour at the Hyde Park Hotel by the All Peoples' Association, which works for his own cause in international co-operation. The poet, who is approaching his seventieth birthday, is more than ever in his appearance the ideal of venerable beauty.

He spoke seated in his chair in a low, even melodious voice - that of a man talking quietly among sympathetic friends. Standing round him eager to hear every word was a diverse and interesting company representing the East and West. It was strongly international in character. Mr. Bernard Shaw, the apotheosis of Western common sense, was deep in converse with the leader of Indian idealist philosophy. There were in the room Indian princes, official representatives of a dozen foreign countries, publicists like Sir Norman Angell and Mr. Evelyn Wrench, scholars like Dr. Bevan and Dr. Edward Thompson, artists and literary men, and unique artist both in line and in words, Mr. Max Beerbohm.

Dr. Tagore spoke of the difficulty of cultivating the international mind of the West, where a militant aggressive individualism had been so much pursued and made into a cult. The tendency was apparent also in Western politics and was the cause of divisions between the nations. Although the same spirit of collective egoism existed in the East, still the spirit there was more that of community life than the exclusive spirit of individualism.

### **Inspiration of English Poets**

He went on to describe the growth of the spirit of internationalism in his own life and mind. He spoke of the influence upon his own family in his youth of the great personality of Rammohan Roy - the first man who had this great background of humanity for all his teachings and who had intense love for all mankind.

Dr. Tagore went on to say that Western literature and culture came to them (he was speaking of his own family) through the poems of the great minds of Europe, who were filled with sentiment, universal in its character, of the love of humanity, and freedom. Some of these great poets were not now held in the same honour as in their own homes, "but they still remain as our ideals and our sources of inspiration, and we still remember how intense was the love for Shakespeare, Byron, Keats and other classical poets of the West."

As an example of how the inspiration of the English poets went to the heart of that generation in India, he told how a young man roused him at midnight when he was asleep and said that he had just read a wonderful line in Keats and must repeat it, which he did. "Since then things have changed, but that was a great thing for us. We often tried to repudiate the West, but deep in our being there is a real reverence and admiration for the great things when truly represent Western humanity, and we have within us from the beginning of our lives that cultural meeting of East and West.

### **Rampant Nationalism**

"But," Dr. Tagore went on, "the nationalism of to-day, which has become too rampant and self-assertive, that, too, we got from Western sources. We borrowed the spirit of nationalism from the West,

and that is another sign of our deep admiration for Western civilisation." This cultural mingling was going on more strongly in the East than in the West because the people in the West were too proud and exclusive in their own cultural surroundings and limitations. The West had borrowed from the East its religion, but it had been greatly modified in the process by the Western temperament, and sentiment. In spite of that the religion of the East had been a factor in moulding the Western character and giving it richness and light.

He himself had gone through the stage of aggressive nationalism, but he had lost it now, and had therefore incurred the displeasure of his own countrymen very often. This abstract nationalism often smothered the higher spirit of man, which was found in the individual. In this connection he spoke of the spirit of bragging and boastfulness which he found in Japan in 1916, and contrasted it with the beautiful human relationships among the people. Humanity was often obscured behind the passion of nationalism.

His own experiences in the West had helped him cherish the ideal of internationalism, and he was also greatly helped because when he became known to the Western world he found it easy to occupy a warm corner of their hearts. He felt it his duty to try to utilise this feeling, which he had been fortunate to win in the West, and to bring it to his own country, so as to try to bridge the gulf which was widening every day between East and West.

### **Attack on the Politicians**

"You. politics here," he went on, "represent the same aggressive individualism. We cannot altogether obliterate national temperamental differences. There must be separateness between peoples. When it is merely on the surface, it doesn't hurt, but when it becomes selfishness, greed and antipathy which cause separateness then it is not separateness of national demarcations but darkness and the bottomless abyss.

"You have seen the mischief of this, and have tried to bring about peace through the agency of the League of Nations, but there the nations are represented not by the dreamers and idealists but by their politicians. I can't think this is right in any

work which is meant to establish peace. It is like organising a band of robbers into a police department. I have travelled in different countries lately, and everywhere I have seen signs of sufferings caused by these very politicians - how they have bungled their peace conference and to what an end they have brought this great civilisation."

Finally Dr. Tagore spoke of his attempt to create an atmosphere of mutual sympathy in his own institution at Santiniketan. He had done his best to keep his work outside political entanglement and turmoil. That was the one constitution in India where the students were absolutely natural in their relationship with visitors from the West. He had created this atmosphere with the help of some great scholars from Europe. This work he was trying to carry on in the midst of this great cyclone of political restlessness in India. To counteract the evil of nationalism there should be other channels of communication where East and West could meet in the pure spirit of sympathy and co-operation. "I have often wished that some great minds from England could come to India not merely as members of the ruling class but to spread their human love among our people".

9 May, 1931

**THE SPECTATOR**

p737(W)

#### **Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

#### **THE COLOUR BAR**

**(To the Editor of the SPECTATOR)**

SIR. - An Englishman finds his mental comfort disturbed when he has to deal with differences that are foreign to him, for he has inherited an intense consciousness of race individuality from an ancestry brought up in geographical segregation. A marked difference in colour which makes too conspicuous the difference in race produces in his conventional mind an aggressive sense of alienation. The same thing happens with regard to a different dress, as I have often noticed in my case even in a metropolis like London or in

American towns, where, curiously enough, strangers are less tolerated in their strangeness than in England. In the continental countries of Europe I have never once aroused among those with whom I travelled their sense of the comic by my costume, which I am sure, has not the slightest element of the ludicrous, specially when compared with their own. It is from the same cause that an Englishman feels not merely amused but positively irritated at the wrong pronunciation of his language by foreigners who cannot help being foreigners in the habits of their tongues.

It is a sign of national provincialism thus to associate natural difference in others with inherent inferiority and disagreeableness. Of all peoples in India, we in Bengal suffer from this imperfect adaptability of imagination which causes arrogance. It is owing to our provincialism, for we have been accustomed for centuries to live in a remote mannerism. The Bengali people are prone to keep themselves isolated when in unaccustomed surroundings, and they have an unenviable talent of making themselves unpopular with the people of other provinces of India.

Up to a certain point this tendency of aloofness has its advantage in emphasizing individuality which helps to conquer opportunities for itself, and Bengali people undoubtedly did utilize that advantage, capturing special privileges long before others were ready in the field. But when history has to be made great through perfect co-operation with neighbours, through a spirit of mutual concession and understanding, our ungenerous habit of jealous self-assertiveness offers obstacles, and we are likely to recede into the background.

The stubborn insularity of the Englishman has helped him in the beginning of his career of conquest. He naturally failed to identify himself even in a slight degree with the Indian people whom he ruled from a supercilious distance. This proud detachment has no doubt helped him in ruling a foreign race with a vigorous efficiency. But such an imperfect relationship in human affairs maintained by force cannot last long. At last the time inevitably comes when history has to be made great upon a positive basis of co-operation, and not merely upon the negative basis of law and order. It is not the race which can rule that has the historical fitness to survive, but the race which

understands, which has the sympathetic imagination - in other words, the moral power of adaptability. After all, in the long run it will come true that the meek shall inherit the earth. Colour prejudice shows the lack of power of social adaptation. Our own history began with it, and though India desperately tried some kind of mechanical race adjustment, she has failed in giving birth to a living political organism owing to this abnormal caste consciousness that obstructs the stream of human sympathy and spirit of mutual co-operation. This is the reason why, in spite of the fact that India has produced a series of great minds, she has not produced a great organic history; and it has yet to be seen if such a history is in the making in which two peoples of different colours can have a perfect bond of life from across the sea. - I am, Sir, &c.,

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

**Santiniketan, India, April 17th, 1931.**

*10 June, 1931*

**THE LISTENER**

p56(W)

### **THE RELIGION OF MAN**

**By Rabindranath Tagore. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.**

**From Drury Lane to Mecca. Told by Eric Rosenthal. Sampson Low. 12s. 6d.**

The Hibbert Lectures delivered in 1930 by Rabindranath Tagore have a distinction of their own. They contain much of the story of the poet's life, for he claims to have reached his religion not by way of philosophy, but by direct vision; and the student of India ought to study Tagore no less than Gandhi. Where he deals with familiar subjects he always uses an Indian idiom; and it is a fresh and welcome study to follow the track of evolution under the guidance of a Bengali poet. But the reader will seek to discover what distinctive contribution this poet has to make, not to science or to philosophy, but to religion. "My religion", he says, "is the reconciliation of the super-personal man, the univer-

sal human spirit in my own individual being". It is an eclectic religion, though the language in which it is described is largely Indian. The great teachers of religion, it is claimed, came as the messengers of man to men of all countries and spoke of the salvation that could only be reached by the perfecting of our relationship with Man the Eternal, Man the Divine'. Doctrines or dogmas borrowed from their own times and tradition must be transcended. This is expounded with a wealth of poetic imagery. Often it seems the reduction to philosophic language of a poetic intuition, and the less the religion of the poet than the philosophy of one who is not in reality a philosopher, but a poet. The process of sublimation whereby an attempt is made to obtain the essence of religion, has often been tried, but has never succeeded. And in spite of the emphasis laid upon man, the religion which is described in this book is too abstract to make a wide appeal. In his attempt to reduce his experiences to a philosophy, the poet sacrifices that crystal clearness which should mark the sacramental religion of a poet. But there is much in every one of the lectures which every student of religion will do well to ponder.

**EDWARD SHILLITO**

*27 June, 1931*

**THE SPECTATOR**

p1002-1003(W)

### **A Literary Revival in Bengal**

**By BHABANI BHATTACHARYA**

As the storm of political struggle in India begins to cease, it will be time for foreigners interested in the country to consider the more permanent aspects of its national life. In general, Indians are not politically minded; they are much more impressed by things of beauty, in its widest sense, than by machinery of practical utility. The genius of India lies in its infinite capacity for absorbing new ideas into the stream of ancient Aryan culture. To-day, in no other field is this genius so furiously at work as in the literature of Bengal.

Chaitanya, a Bengali saint and mystic, is said

to have fallen into trance when he beheld the sea for the first time. Its terrific beauty roused madness in his blood. The great saint ran breathless into the water and did not stop till the waves carried him away.

The story has a wide significance. Chaitanya was a typical child of the soil; in him were developed, to an amazing degree, the feelings and desires that stir the mind of the people of Bengal. To the Bengali mind nothing is so irresistible as nature's beauty, and this racial trait has deeply tinged the literature of the country. For a long time Bengali poets hardly drew on Life, for they looked upon it with the closed eyes of introverts. Then, in the closing decades of the last century Western thought overflowed to the plains of Bengal, and English literature, which may fairly be called an interpretation of Life, set up new standards and new principles. The genius of Bengal began to work, assimilating the new into the old. The new school of writers which came into being had one eye on Nature and the other on Man. Their methods became matured by the advent of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, in whose work there is a meeting between East and West. He borrowed as freely from Browning as from the *Upanishads*.

A new milestone had been reached, but the march had not stopped. New pastures lay ahead. A younger generation sprang up, and sharpened the steel of criticism to attack the work of established writers.

For many years, Dr. Tagore has been a literary Dictator and it has been a fashion to imitate his style. Now the fashion has changed, Dr. Tagore has become "classical" and legendary, but he is still as influential in Bengal as he ever was, and the country pays to his work the same kind of veneration as it used to pay when he was honoured with the Nobel prize.

Bengali literature is now in a melting-pot, with a furious fire burning beneath. The new order of writers are determined experimentalists. Some of them evoke the wrath of critics for "obscene" work. But, in their justification they do not dig out the *cliche* of art for art's sake; instead, they pull down whole structure of existing moral values, to the horror of elderly readers and the delight of the young. "Down with tradition", is the battle-cry on the lips of thousands.

The experiments with form are sometimes

pushed to such extremes that they fail and what was designed to reveal originality assumes the air of cheap literary jugglery. Dr. Tagore told me recently that what he disliked most in young Bengali writers was their constant effort to be "smart". An artist, he said in reply to a question of mine, should never be self-conscious in his work; he should write not to show his cleverness, but to lift the heavy burden of ideas and emotions weighing on his mind. A talented Bengali writer has lately published a novel which begins almost at the end of the story and works back to the beginning. By attempting to do something strikingly original, the author has turned a readable story into a dull piece which drags after the first chapter. It is easy to multiply instances of "ultra-modern" Bengali authors who have inadvertently misused their craft in pursuit of a cheap "success". The country is full of talented writers who have been ineffectually beating their wings.

The heat and fury in recent Bengali literature is not without significance. There is creative energy in abundance, but much of it has not yet taken shape. The substance is present, but the form is lacking; for the new wine has burst the old bottle and must flow over until a proper vessel is found for it. With the expansion of literature, the language is steadily growing. New words are being coined by the hundred. The Bengali language is proving itself to be as flexible as the English.

Poverty is great in Bengal. The zeal of many writers weakens away, not infrequently, under the stress of hard work to earn a living. Payment for stories and articles is negligible. To write is to labour for love. The young writer considers it an honour to get his work into print, and the question of payment does not arise.

Among foreign authors, who have cast a great influence over young literary men in Bengal, the name of Knut Hamsun must receive the first mention. His *Hunger* has a special appeal to the starving writer for obvious reasons, but the popularity of *Pan* and *The Growth of the Soil* goes deeper than that. Dostoevsky and Gorki are regarded with veneration. Anatole France was much in the public eye a few years ago, but seems at present to be under a cloud. Shaw, Wells and Bertrand Russell are among those who are universally read, and have left a deep impression on the literary pro-

ductions of the county. Bengali poetry has been much influenced by Walt Whitman. Not even a decade has passed since the day when a bitter controversy raged round Whitman's work, some critics declaring it to be unreadable. But those critics were fighting with swords of wood, and the Whitmanites won the battle.

No account of the literary revival in Bengal can be complete unless mention is made of Sarat Chatterji, who is India's greatest novelist at the present day. It is unfortunate that Sarat Chatterji is not known to English readers even by name, though one of his works has been translated into English. In Bengal he is well known for his novels as Dr. Tagore is for his poetry, and he has been the most vital force in the making of modern Bengali fiction. Romain Rolland read one of his novels in an Italian translation and expressed the warmest admiration for its author.

Economical in style, Sarat Chatterji writes with the minimum of embroidery, and creates his effects as much by the brilliance of his technique as by his psychological insight.

He always builds with organic material. The life of common man is the pivot around which his stories move. He runs up quickly to the human soul, and tells us of it with an infectious intensity. Nothing is commonplace to him; he finds moving realities behind the plain veil of appearances, and makes the lotus in a slough of mud. Never does he fail to hold the mirror up to human nature. Some of his women characters have haunted my mind for weeks and months much as Mona Lisa has done; their mystery of soul has suggested infinite possibilities and has given wings to the imagination. In his later works, Sarat Chatterji builds up the most difficult psychological situations, in which a slight misplacing of material might ruin the whole structure, but such an error is never made.

Not that the author is deliberately intent on parading his architectural powers. On the contrary, his stories seem to tell themselves. Sarat Chatterji is undoubtedly a master-builder; his works ought to be translated into every civilized language in the world.

10 July, 1931

## THE FRIEND

p642(W)

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON RUSSIA

(At the Meeting for Sufferings, during the discussion on religious persecution in Russia, several references were made to Rabindranath Tagore's remarkable speech, during his visit to Russia, in an interview with a reporter of the *Isvestia*. This was published in the *Manchester Guardian* of October 14th, 1930. In accordance with a suggestion that it might appear in *THE FRIEND*, we have pleasure in printing it herein.)

DR. TAGORE said: I wish to let you know how deeply I have been impressed by the amazing intensity of your energy in spreading education among the peasant masses, the most intelligent direction you have given to this work, and also the variety of channels that have been opened out to train their minds and senses and limbs. For human beings all other boons that are external and superficial, that are imposed from outside, are like paints and patches that never represent the bloom of health. You have recognised the truth that extirpating all social evils one has to go to the root, which can only be done through education and not through police batons and military brow-beating.

### Materialism and an Ideal

But I find here certain contradictions to the great mission which you have undertaken. Certain attitudes of mind are being cultivated which are contrary to your ideal about the method of radical social improvement. I must ask you: Are you doing your ideal a service by arousing in the minds of those under your training anger, class-hatred, and revengefulness against those whom you consider to be your enemies? True, you have to fight against tremendous obstacles, you have to overcome ignorance and lack of sympathy, and even persistently virulent antagonism. But your mission is not restricted to your own nation or your own party, but it is for the betterment of humanity according to your light. But does not humanity include those who do not agree with your aims? Just as you try

to help peasants who have other ideas than yours about religion, economics and social life, not be getting fatally angry with them but by patiently teaching them and showing them where the evil lurks in secret, should you not have the same mission to those other people who have other ideals than your own? These you may consider to be mistaken ideals, but they have an historical origin, and have become inevitable through combinations of circumstances. You may consider the men who hold them to be misguided. But it should all the more be your purpose to convert them by pity and love, realising that they are as much a party of humanity as the peasants you serve.

### **An Appeal for Charitable Understanding**

If you dwell too much upon the evil elements of your opponents, assuming that those are inherent in their human nature, meriting eternal damnation, you inspire an attitude of mind which with its content of hatred and animosity, may some day react against your own ideal and destroy it. You are working in a great cause. Therefore you must be great in your mind, great in your mercy, your understanding and your patience. I feel profound admiration for the greatness of the things you are trying to accomplish, and therefore I cannot help expecting for it a motive force of love and an environment of charitable understanding. There must be disagreement where minds are allowed to be free. It would be not only an uninteresting world but a sterile world of mechanical regularity if all our opinions were forcibly made alike. If you have a mission which includes all humanity, for the sake of that living humanity, you must acknowledge the existence of differences of temperament and of opinion. Opinions are constantly changed and re-changed through the free circulation of intellectual forces and moral persuasion. Violence begets violence and blind stupidity. Freedom of mind is needed for the reception of truth; terror hopelessly kills it. The brute cannot subdue the brute. It is only the man who can do it. This is being proved every day in our human history.

### **Admiration for a Great Ideal**

Before leaving your country, let me once again assure you that I am struck with admiration for all that

you are doing to free those who were in slavery, to raise up those who were lowly and oppressed, and to bring help to those who were utterly helpless, reminding them that the source of their salvation lies in a proper education and their power to combine their human resources.

### **Repression of Freedom?**

For the sake of humanity I hope that you may never create a vicious force of violence, which will go on weaving an interminable chain of violence and cruelty. Already you have inherited much of this legacy from the Tsarist regime. It is the worst legacy you possibly could have. You have tried to destroy many of the other evils of that period. Why not try to destroy this one also? I have learned much from you, how skilfully you evolve usefulness out of the helplessness of the weak and ignorant. Your ideal is great, and so I ask you for perfection in serving it and a broad field of freedom for laying its permanent foundation.

### **Appreciation**

Asked to name the institutions in Moscow which had impressed him most, the Poet said:

The orphans at the Home of the Young Pioneers showed such confidence in their ability to realise their ideal for a new world. Their behaviours to me was so natural. Their conduct impressed me deeply. Then at the Peasants' House I met the peasants. We questioned each other quite frankly. Their problems are so similar to the problem of the peasants in my own country. I was deeply impressed by the attitude of mind of your peasants towards the methods you have evolved for solving these problems. Places I have not been able to visit have been visited by my secretaries. My doctor tells me of the fine work you are doing in sanitation, hygiene, scientific research. My secretaries tell me of your splendid work in training students of agriculture, in caring for and training the homeless children left by war and famine, and of the outstanding experiment in practical education being carried on by Mr. Shatsky in his colony, whose ideal of the institution I also share.

*30 October, 1931***THE TIMES**

p18c4(D)

... VOICELESS INDIA, by Gertrude Emerson (Allen and Unwin, 15s net), is a record of her experience by an American lady journalist who avoided the famous ruins and great cities and lived for some months in a village on the Nepal border. It has an enthusiastic, angry introduction by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who takes it as an attack on British apathy and the land tax. The English reader who knows India will find a good deal of superfluous information in the book, which is primarily for an American public. He will feel, too, that Miss Emerson, like so many of her countrywomen, while critical of the administration, is loath to lay any heavy blame for India's poverty on Indian social customs. But the book, despite the fact that something of the 'stunt' vitiates its story is full of charming detail, and is the work of a woman who noticed the life she was enjoying. Her testimony to the attractiveness of the village people will be echoed by the British reader who has worked in their midst.

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*17 November, 1931***THE PETERBOROUGH CITIZEN**

p3c4(W)

**HIS LIFE STORY**  
**Told by Ronald Colman**  
**THE GREAT SCREEN STAR**

[Only the relevant paragraphs form the report are included here.]

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Ronald Colman is regarded as one of the greatest film actors in Hollywood, and he is English. He is a first favourite with Peterborough audiences. The "Citizen" continues to-day Ronald Colman's life story, written by himself.

**A Young and Darkish Man**

In the summer of 1916, an uncle of mine, in the Foreign office, had been trying to arrange an appointment for me with a consulate in the Orient. While these negotiations were going forward and, by the merest chance, I met some friends of Lena Ashwell, she was putting on a sketch at the Coliseum in London, and who wanted a young and darkish man for a role. I was introduced, and apparently satisfied the requirements.

"The playlet is 'The Maharance of Arakan', by Tagore", said Miss Ashwell. "I want you to be a herald to a princess. I hope you don't mind bearing a flag, and tooting a trumpet, and making up -"

"In a black face?"

"Yes, like Othello when he was a boy", she replied. "And with all the pride, pomp and circumstance that Othello speaks of thrown in".

We got on famously. Not that I was infatuated with the throbbing life of a herald, but I knew this job was bound to lead to something. It did. It was the means of meeting Sir Gerald du Marier, as well as Miss Gladys Cooper. I did a bit with miss Cooper in "The Misleading Lady". Then came a leading part that of the young man in Brieux's "Darr aged Goods"; this was the role Richard Bennett played in America ...

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1932

30 January, 1932

THE SPECTATOR

p145(W)

### THE ISSUE IN INDIA

(To the Editor of the SPECTATOR)

SIR, - The behaviour of the panic-stricken Government has startled the nation and has compelled me to come out with the following message to my own people who have been provoked to intense indignation suppressed by force.

"Mahatmaji has been arrested without having been given a chance of coming to a mutual understanding with the Government. It only shows that of the two - partners in the building of the history of India - the people of India can be superciliously ignored according to our rulers. However, the fact has to be accepted as a fact, and we must prove to the world that we are important, more important than the other factor, which is merely an accident. But if we lose our head and give vent to a sudden fit of political insanity, blindly suicidal, a great opportunity will be missed. The despair itself should give us the profound calmness of strength, the grim determination which silently works its own fulfilment without wasting its resources in puerile emotionalism and self-thwarting destructiveness. This is the moment when it should be easy for us to forget all our accumulated prejudices against our kindreds, when we must do our best to combine our hands in brotherly love, even with those who have roughly rejected our call or comradeship, when we must claim of ourselves an intense urge of co-operation with all different parts of our nation. This is the kind of catastrophe which rarely comes to a people, with a shock that brings to a focus our scattered forces and shortens the difficulties of our creative endeavour in the building of its freedom.

"The primitive lawlessness of the law-makers should forcibly awaken us to our own ultimate salvation in a love undaunted by the menace of a power indiscriminate suspicion that its blind panic cannot define. This is the time when we must never

forget our responsibility to prove ourselves morally superior to those who are physically powerful in a measure that can defy their own humanity". - I am, Sir, &c.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Santi-Niketan. Bengal.

*(Sir Rabindranath entirely misunderstands the duty of the Government of India to keep order for the sake of the whole people. It is doing so without any panic. Mr. Gandhi's arrest was plainly welcome to the prisoner. - Ed. Spectator)*

18 February, 1932

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

p115(W)

**THE CHILD.** By RABINDRANATH TAGORE  
73/4 X 51/4, 21pp. Allen and Unwin. 2s. 6d. n.

The title which Rabindranath Tagore has given to his new poem hardly suggests the wide sweep of its contents. Not that it is a long poem. But within its twenty-one pages it embraces the whole spiritual pilgrimage of man from the darkness of confusion and strife to the light that dawned in Bethlehem. We are shown the pre-Christian "Man of Faith" who seeks to lead the multitude that follows him "through the night's blindness" into the kingdom of living light." They inevitably refuse him in doubt and kill him in anger. For only by becoming "the great victim" can he be victorious over their hearts. Through his sacrifice their eyes are opened and they strive onwards to the goal towards which he has led them. And when they reach it and the gate opens :

The mother is seated on a straw bed  
with the babe on her lap,  
Lick the dawn with the morning star.  
Through "the new-born" they understand  
at least  
The mystery of rebirth into "the ever-living"

The poet retells this ancient but eternally new story, with a quiet and beautiful simplicity.

16 May, 1932  
**THE TIMES**  
 p6c2(D)

## GOOD WILL IN INDIA

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir, - We write in the hope that you will, through your columns, give publicity to the appeal for mutual goodwill from Rabindranath Tagore which we enclose. This message was given to some members of the Society of Friends who lately visited India. We think that such an appeal from an Indian of so outstanding an influence should be widely known, and we believe that the public opinion of our own country is ready to welcome and respond to it.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM EBOR:  
 A.D. LINDSAY.  
 GILBERT MURRAY (1).  
 FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

May 14.

### MESSAGE FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

From the depths of the present atmosphere of suffering the cry has come for the inauguration of a new age of faith and reconciliation, for a fellowship of understanding between races and nations alienated by cruel politics and diplomacy. We in India are ready for a fundamental change in our affairs which will bring harmony and understanding into our relationship with those who have inevitably been brought near to us. We are waiting for a gesture of good will from both sides spontaneous and generous in its faith in humanity which will create a future of moral federation, of constructive works of public good, of the inner harmony of peace between the peoples of India and England.

The visit of our friends from England has confirmed the immediate possibility of such an intimate fellowship and-truth in our mutual relation-

ship, and I feel called upon to appeal to all who have the welfare of humanity at heart to come forward at this critical hour and courageously take upon themselves the task of fulfilling the moral responsibility which is before us, of building upon the bare foundation of faith, of acceptance of truth in a spirit of generous mutual forgiveness.

The memory of the past, however painful it may have been for us all, should never obscure the vision of the perfect - of the future which it is for us jointly to create. Indeed, our experience of the futility of suspicion and hostility must inspire us with a profounder belief in the truth of the simple fellowship of hearts, in the mighty power of creative understanding between individuals as well as nations inspired by a common urge of love.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

20 May, 1932  
**THE TIMES**  
 p10c1(D)

### Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Sir, - the assumption which runs through the message from Rabindranath Tagore, and appears to be endorsed by the Archbishop of York - and his co-signatories, is that there is ill-will on the part of Britons towards the Indian peoples which to be banished by a "gesture". There is no foundation whatever for this assumption. Towards the assassins of British and India officials, and the small section which is endeavouring to destroy British trade and to drive us out of the country by making government impossible with the object of securing power for itself, we may feel a just and natural indignation. If, however, we strongly object to impose upon India a further instalment of democracy, which has already caused the death of thousands of Indians, it is only because we cherish real affection for India and her peoples, and because we hope to save them from the fate of China.

When Rabindranath Tagore writes of a "cry"

for a new age of faith and reconciliation he seems to forget the terrible experience at Cawnpore and the recent violent racial outbreak at Bombay, which but for the British intervention would have been far more fatal. It is not "peace between the peoples of India and England" that is urgently needed, but an end to the age-long communal hatred, always ready to blaze out in murderous conflicts. Democracy in India has inevitably rendered these conflicts more frequent and more violent.

Meanwhile there is nothing but good will, on the part of all who still form the overwhelming majority of the population.

**LOUIS STUART**

Indian Empire Society, 28, Alfred place.  
S.W7. May 17.

—

23 September, 1932

**EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS**

p8c3(D)

[The following excerpt is taken from Murial Morgan Gibbon's report on the visit of the Prince of Wales at Copenhagen for the inauguration of the Anglo-Danish exhibition. Only the relevant part is quoted.]

### Scene of "Hamlet"

The "Best Commercial Traveller of the Empire" will assuredly have his time fully occupied with the Exhibition, but, perhaps, he will find time to visit Elsinore and Kronberg Castle, the scene of "Hamlet" ... The castle itself is well worth a visit. When I was there one of the main rooms was set aside for a lecture by the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. He was a venerable figure, with long white beard and flowing robe, rather like one's idea of a Jewish patriarch, and there was something strange in an Oriental lecturing in perfect English to a Danish audience, in a Danish castle which owes its fame to the greatest Englishman of all time.

—

10 December, 1932

**THE PASSING SHOW**

p17(W)

### THE WINGED PHILOSOPHER PRIVATE LIVES No. 38 by the "PRIVATE SECRETARY"

Who is this patriarch with the luminous eyes?

Is he a wanderer from some legendary land?

What is he doing in the Noise-and-Speed Age?

He is the Man from the East. The Human Poem. The Seeker for the Perfect Life. The Philosopher. The Mystic.

And he jolly well enjoys a spin in a racing car! Or an aeroplane journey!

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, of Santiniketan, Bengal, India.

He is over seventy. He has a long white beard. And curling white hair.

Clear bright brown eyes, shining, penetrating ... Slender white hands, with almost feminine fingers.

(During talk he places these hands in devotional attitudes.)

Talk to him at his cottage in a little village near Calcutta.

It is only a cottage, with bare walls, fibre mats, and simply carved furniture.

He is speaking of his quest. His bright brown eyes grow more and more luminous:

"We are all seeking to solve the riddle of the unknown.

"Nothing can be achieved by materialism.

"Man can express his emotions only in poetry."

As he thinks, so he lives and writes. He pours out poems. He lives continually in the spiritual exaltation of a poem.

Therefore he is famous to the world. Therefore he is revered in his village.

The simple folk come to his cottage eager for words of hope and wisdom.

Thy do not disturb him. He can meditate in their presence.

But few Western friends are invited to the cottage.

They may visit the Sage's home in Calcutta. More than a house - it is an art gallery.

Priceless Chinese pottery vies with magnificent

Japanese embroideries and delicate water-colours of the sublime Fuji-yama. In place of mats, rich Persian and Indian rugs dazzle the eye.

Here, too, are gifts from all over the World.

There is many a famous name on the fly-leaves of the books.

The furniture is like that of many a wealthy English home. Just a little more carving and a little less upholstery.

The fine reception rooms are thronged when Sir Rabindranath is at home. You hear a dozen languages at once.

To see him alone is difficult. Time counts little. There are greater things in his philosophy than days and hours. Often appointments must wait without apology.

The books and the poems are written before the heat of the tropical day. Or in the late evening, before the night falls in dark, mysterious blue, star-spangled, like the draperies in the house.

But the desk at which the Mystic works is businesslike and plain. And he uses a pad on his knee for quick jottings as the inspired thoughts come.

He loves flowers. As you enter, you encounter the exotic perfume of Eastern tube-rose, magnolia, and pomegranate blossom. They inspire his poems.

Also, strange to Western nostrils, float penetrating odours of cedar and sandalwood.

Even in the West these aromas seem to surround him. They are, so to say, another link between the Indian robes and the well-modulated English voice.

Yet Sir Rabindranath most passionately lives the simple life.

He gets up at 4 a.m. every day, whether at home or abroad. Then three hours of meditation. Then breakfast.

That is a simple meal, chiefly fruit

But he has no fads about food. That of any country he will eat without comment, rather than inconvenience people.



Fig. 45 *The Passing Show*, 10 December, 1932, p17

He is an incessant and enthusiastic traveller. Many of his journeys are to America, where they like his teaching. And he admires the scientific discoveries of the West:

"Science is helping us to solve the meaning and the mystery of existence. Thus it is ultimately solving the actual secret of Creation."

So he sent his son to the United States for a scientific education.

This Sage is full of contrasts. He denounces machinery, "which strives to make of man but a living machine."

Yet he recently flew from Calcutta to Bushire. Not content, he returned in a 'plane from Baghdad.

Near Tagore's home at Santiniketan is his famous College. This contains a school for young children, whom he teaches mainly by means of art and music.

He devotes his earnings and the income from his Nobel prize to the College. Among his many ideals this is the most cherished.

Students come to him from all the orient. They love and reverence him.

For he makes friends everywhere. His secret is, that he can understand the yearnings of them all.

And he moves among them as their patriarch. Always in his long brown gown, with wide sleeves, girdled like a monk's.

And on his feet are sandals.

Enemies accuse him of vanity, but he has nothing but a simple pride in keeping with a simple type of dress.

His greatest tragedy was the loss of his wife

thirty years ago. He has never married again, for there was no one to equal her.

Women's questions have always interested him. Much of his poetry has a special appeal to women. Memories of his wife inspire it.

His recreation is reading and the novels of Galsworthy share honours with the works of Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells.

He reads all the modern English poets: "I can learn more of the Soul of the Nation from them."

In his study, too, are the latest scientific works, English and American.

Almost his greatest friend is Sir William Rothenstein. They argue for hours. And another friend is Mr. C. F. Andrews, student of Indian philosophy.

To Tagore there is little distinction between East and West - merely a difference in expression.

Leave him, seated on a low divan, his hands folded motionless as if in prayer... the great luminous eyes gazing into the starlit Indian night ...

He is seeking to solve the eternal riddle, the quest of the Soul of man ...

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1933

10 June, 1933  
**THE TIMES**  
p11c4(D)

## **POLITICAL PRISONERS IN INDIA**

### **APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT**

About 60 prominent Indians, headed by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, have sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, and the Secretary of State for India representing "the strong feeling widely prevalent in the country among all classes that it is time political prisoners detained without trial or convicted of offences not involving violence, mostly under ordinances or special laws, should be released." The telegram states:

"It will be of greatest value that Congress be invited to collaborate in shaping Constitution now

under examination and we urge this should be done *Government communique* following suspension of civil disobedience produced dismay and resentment among all who desire ordered national development. We appeal to statesmanship of his Majesty's Government to respond with alacrity to gesture of good will made by Congress and thereby restore atmosphere favourable to reception reform under consideration. We dread to contemplate unhappy consequences of the attitude of non-cooperation on the part of the Government."

The signatories include Sir Sivaswami Aiyer, Sir M. Visveswaraya, Sir Chunilal Mehta, Sir Prafulla C. Ray, Lady Ali Imam, Sir Morpant Joshi, Sardar Ujjal Singh, Mr. Mohammed Fakruddin, Mr. N.B. Tambe, Mr. G.D. Birla, Sir Deviprasad Savadhikary, Mr. G.Y. Chintamani, Mrs. Subbarvan, Mr. B.D. Jadhav, Lady Ramambhai, Dr. R.P. Paranjpye, Mr. G. Natesan, Lord Sinha, Mr. N.C. Kekar, Mr. J.N. Basu, Professor Karve, and Mr. Harilal Desai.

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**1934**

*8 February, 1934*

**THE TIMES**

p13c5(D)

## **THE EARTHQUAKE IN INDIA**

### **THEORY OF DIVINE "VISITATION"**

#### **MR. GANDHI REBUKED**

**FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT**

**CALCUTTA, FEB. 7**

Though in general all are combining readily to meet the situation in the earthquake regions in Bihar, there is some tendency, as expressed prominently by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, to use the occasion to discredit the Government. Nine leading men of Bihar, representative of many interests have combined, however, to pay a tribute to the manner in which officials have done their duty in the present emergency. They declare that, considering the immense havoc, "it is remarkable, that local officers, from the commissioner down to the ordinary constable, have continued to perform their duties and discharge their responsibilities in a manner which ought to evoke the admiration and gratitude of us all, "and maintain that there was no undue delay in getting into touch with Patna headquarters or going for prompt relief. They deeply regret that when the Province is suffering from a colossal cataclysm a view should be expressed unwarranted by facts and detrimental to the smooth cooperation of officials and non-officials.

Another protest has been issued in Bengal by Dr Rabindranath Tagore, who is painfully surprised to find Mr. Gandhi "accusing those who blindly follow their own social custom of untouchability for having brought down God's vengeance upon certain parts of Bihar evidently specially selected for his desolating displeasure."

If, he says, we associate ethical principles with cosmic phenomena we must admit that human nature is superior to a providence that teaches good behaviour by orgies of the worst possible behaviour.

The law of gravitation has nothing to do with the stupendous load of callousness on the earth. "Mr Gandhi's argument better suits the psychology of his opponents; it would not have been surprising had they held him responsible for this visitation of divine anger". It hurts when Mr. Gandhi, who has given his countrymen freedom from fear and feebleness, emphasizes the elements of unreason in their minds, "the unreason which is the fundamental source of all the blind powers that drive us against freedom and self-respect."

*13 November, 1934*

**THE TIMES**

p7c1(D)

## **Section: PARLIAMENT**

### **HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**MONDAY, NOV. 12**

THE SPEAKER took the chair at a quarter to 3 o'clock.

#### **NEW WRIT**

On the motion of Captain MARGISSON, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Rugby, U.) a new writ was ordered to be issued for the election of a member for the Putney Division of Wandsworth in room of the late Mr. Samuel Samuel.

#### **AN ARTICLE BY TAGORE**

Mr. R.J. DAVIES (Westhoughton, Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for India whether he was aware that the Government of Bengal had given notice to the *Modern Review of India* that an article written by Rabindranath Tagore entitled "On Russia," which appeared in the *Modern Review* last June, was highly objectionable, and that the editor had been warned that such articles must not be published in future; and, in view of the fact that no objection was taken by the Government of Bengal when this and similar articles were published in book form by this author in 1931, if he would state why this alteration of policy had taken place.

MR. BUTLER, Under-Secretary for India (Saf-  
ron Walden, U.):— It is the case that a warning was  
issued to the editor of the *Modern Review* in respect  
of an article written by Rabindranath Tagore. The  
article was taken from a book called "Letters from  
Russia," which was published in Bengali by a local  
press in 1931. This book attracted little public at-  
tention and consequently no notice was taken of it

by Government, but the translation into English of  
a particular chapter, which was clearly calculated  
by distortion of the facts to bring the British Ad-  
ministration in India into contempt and disrepute,  
and its publication in the forefront of a widely read  
English magazine, put a wholly different complex-  
ion on the case.

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**1935**

*6 February, 1935*

**THE TIMES**

p8c5(D)

## **RELATIONS OF EAST AND WEST**

### **DR. TAGORE ON "A GREAT AWAKENING"**

The Paris office of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, League of Nations, had issued, in its "Open Letters" series correspondence between professor Gilbert Murray and Dr. Rabindranath Tagore on the relations of East and West.

Professor Murray wrote that the thinkers of the world must stand together in these distracted times, "not in one nation but in all nations, reminding all who care to listen of the reality of human brotherhood and the impossibility of basing a durable civilized society on any foundation save peace and the will to act justly." After citing with regret instances of tactlessness and discourtesy in British contact with Indians, Professor Murray wrote that he need not appeal to his eminent correspondent to help in the formation of "Some great League of Mind or

Thought independent of miserable frontiers and tariffs and governmental follies."

In his reply, Dr. Tagore was unsparing in repetition of his well-known condemnation of Western exploitation of the East. The whole of Asia to-day, he wrote, denies the moral superiority of Europe, but to withstand her ravages Asia "is preparing to imitate the ruthless aspect that slays, which eats raw flesh, which tries to make the swallowing process easier by putting the blame on the victim." Dr. Tagore recognizes, however, that western Humanity, "when not affected by its unnatural relationship with the East, preserves a singular strength of moral conduct in the domain of its social life, which has its great inspiration for all of us." In the life of the West there is, after all, a large tract where the mind is free.

In spite of Western feelings and Indian disunity in the greed "for immediate political result," Dr. Tagore does not feel despondent about the future. To-day all over the world, in spite of selfishness and unreason, he sees a greater awareness of truth, a great awakening of the human conscience. For instance, in India Mahatma Gandhi's singular purity of will and conduct is creating "a new generation of clear-minded servers of our people."

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***Period 1936-1941***

**Oxford Degree  
Death**



1936

4 January, 1936

**THE TIMES**

p7c4(D)

**MODERNIST WORK BY TAGORE**

**TO BE SHOWN AT CROYDON**

**FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT**

**PLYMOUTH, JAN. 3**

Two modernist impressions by the Bengali poet and artist, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, which are to be presented to the Borough of Croydon, were brought home from Calcutta by Mr. Ranald Newson, of Croydon, in the liner *Mulbera*, which arrived at Plymouth to-day. They are given to Mr. Newson as a mark of esteem for his work at the College of Santiniketan, a semi-religious institution founded by Sir Rabindranath Tagore in 1900, with instructions that he should pass them on to the Croydon authorities for exhibition in the Town Hall.

Mr. Newson said that the paintings were examples of the extremely advanced art of Tagore. They have no titles, and it was impossible to define their meaning in a conventional way, as they were impressions of the artist's subconscious mind. Both works are executed in ink.

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4 January, 1936

**WESTERN DAILY PRESS AND BRISTOL MIRROR**

p4c6(D)

**"SUB-CONSCIOUS" PAINTINGS FOR  
A TOWN HALL**

Two paintings by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the famous artist and poet, given by him to the Borough of Croydon, were on board the liner *Mulbera* when she called at Plymouth yesterday.

They are being brought to London by Mr. Ranald Newson, of Croydon, an author who has recently spent six months as lecturer at the college at

Santiniketan in Bengal province, which was founded by Tagore in 1900 and to which he devoted the proceeds of the Nobel Prize.

The paintings, which are done in coloured inks upon pieces of paper of about foolscap size have no titles.

"*The artist*," Mr. Newson explained, "derives his inspiration from sub-conscious images and his work resembles that of modern French painters more than contemporary Indian".

One of the paintings represents the head of a bearded man. The other shows five grotesque heads.

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4 January, 1936

**THE WESTERN MORNING NEWS**

p5c1(D)

**INDIAN PICTURES**

**Specimens of Art Arrived at Plymouth**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet and the winner of the Nobel prize for literature in 1913, who now lives at Santiniketan, Bengal, India, has presented two of his pictures to Croydon. They arrived at Plymouth yesterday in the British India liner *Mulbera*, having been brought home in the charge of Mr. Ranald Newson, who for the last six months has been working under Sir Rabindranath at the educational and religious college to which he devoted the proceeds of the Nobel Prize.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who is regarded as one of the three great Indian artists, did not begin to paint pictures until he was sixty years old. He uses ink and coloured pencils for his work, which has been largely exhibited in Russia and France.

Mr. Newson said the artist had a technique of his own. He was a modernist painter of images of the sub-conscious. His work was more like that of the French painters than Indian.

The two pictures destined for Croydon comprise a single head and a group of five male heads. In accordance with his custom, the artist has not given any title to the pictures.

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17 January, 1936

**THE MUNICIPAL JOURNAL & PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEER**

p105(W)

**Section: NEWS FROM ALL QUARTERS**

Two modernist impressions by the Bengali poet and artist, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, which are to be presented to the Borough of Croydon, have been received from Calcutta.

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18 January, 1936

**HALIFAX DAILY COURIER AND GUARDIAN**

p5c4(D)

**TAGORE**

**Bombay, Saturday**

Rabindranath Tagore told Reuter to-day "A voice which added a new power to the English language is to-day hushed in silence and I, among others, who love the great literature of England, sincerely mourn Mr. Kipling's passing.

As the land of his birth, boyhood and early literary fame, India has been anxiously and sympathetically following the bulletins from London.

- Reuter.

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20 January, 1936

**THE TIMES**

p19c2(D)

**INDIAN TRIBUTE**

**Bombay, Jan. 18 - Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has paid the following tribute to Kipling:-**

A voice which added a new power to the English language is to-day hushed in silence, and I among others who love the great literature of England sincerely mourn Mr. Kipling's passing.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said:

I offer my deep homage to the memory of a great Englishman whose dynamic genius brought to Victorian literature so rich a vital a gift of colour, rhythm, beauty and power. The Imperialist sentiment of which he was the supreme evangelist was not acceptable to India, but no Indian who loves English letters can withhold a tribute of admiration from this brilliant artist, who out of words created not mere literature but life.

-Reuter.

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20 January, 1936

**BIRMINGHAM POST**

p11c4(D)

**Bombay, January 18**

India, the land of Kipling's birth, boyhood and early literary fame, had been anxiously following the bulletins from London since he went into hospital.

Rabindranath Tagore's tribute was: "A voice which added a new power to the English language is to-day hushed in silence, and I, among others, who love the great literature of England sincerely mourn Mr. Kipling's passing."

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the poetess, said: "I offer my deep homage to the memory of a great Englishman whose dynamic genius brought to Victorian literature so rich and vital a gift of colour, rhythm, beauty and power."

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20 January, 1936  
**MORNING POST**  
 p12c7(D)

### **"GREAT APOSTLE OF EMPIRE"**

#### **World Tributes to Kipling**

#### **HIS MEMORY AN INSPIRATION "A True Lover of Humanity"**

"A great citizen of the Empire" –

"A great story-teller who never grew up" – "His modest, humility and brave spirit are sacred memories."

These are among the tributes which have been paid by leaders in every walk of life to the memory of Mr. Rudyard Kipling.

General Sir Ian Hamilton (one of his oldest friends) said: His death seems to me to place a full stop to the period when war was a romance and the expansion of our Empire a duty.

Other tributes are:

. . .

### **INDIA**

**Rabindranath Tagore;** A voice which added a new power to the English language is hushed, and I among others who love the great literature of England sincerely mourn Mr. Kipling's passing.

Wreaths are to be placed on the existing memorial tablet at the house in Bombay where Kipling was born. – Reuter.

21 January, 1936  
**EVENING CITIZEN GLASGOW**  
 p5c7(D)

#### **India Mourns New Delhi, Tuesday.**

Indian leaders of all political complexions unanimously agree in declaring that India has lost her

best friend. They recall numerous instances of His Majesty's personal interest in his Indian subjects and gracious acts associated with him since the days when, in 1905-6, he visited India as Prince of Wales.

It is in the sphere particularly of political liberty that the late King's name will be ever remembered by his Indian subjects.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet and playwright:- "It is more than the loss to British subjects of their Sovereign. It is a loss to the whole world of a genuine and great lover of world peace."

Bombay. – Mohammedans have been called to special prayers for King's soul. The Parsees are mourning in community. The Nizam of Hyderabad has postponed his silver jubilee. – Reuter.

21 January, 1936

**NORTH-EASTERN DAILY GAZETTE**  
 p3c3(D)

### **TAGORE'S TRIBUTE**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet and playwright: "It is more than the loss to British subjects of their sovereign. It is a loss to the whole world of a genuine and great lover of world peace."

22 January, 1936  
**THE TIMES**  
 p12c2 D)

### **DR. TAGORE'S TRIBUTE TO "LOVER OF PEACE"**

**FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT  
 CALCUTTA, Jan. 21**

In Calcutta all business and educational institutes were closed to-day.

Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Mayor, issued this message:

On behalf of the citizens of Calcutta, I desire to express profound grief at the death of our beloved

Sovereign, and most humbly to offer earnest sympathy and sincere condolence to her Most Gracious Majesty, and to the members of the Royal Family.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore says:-

We all share the mourning that has so suddenly fallen upon the British Empire. More than the mere loss to British subjects of the Sovereign it is a loss to the whole world of a genuine and great lover of world peace.

The High Court, at a full session presided over by the chief Justice, formally recorded its sorrow at the King's death and adjourned.

Of all the events which will mark the King's reign the greatest in an effort for constructive peace was the foundation of the League of Nations. And King George V. spoke of it on one occasion in words that will always be remembered by peace-workers throughout the British Commonwealth. "Nothing is more essential," he said, "than a strong and enduring League of Nations. I commend the cause to all the citizens of my Empire."

And at a time like this it is right to recall that it is to our prince, now King Edward VIII., that we also owe one of the most inspiring of our watch-words - "the greatest crusade of all is the crusade for world peace." - I am, &c.,

Jan 22.

GWILYM DAVIES.

23 January, 1936

**WESTERN MAIL & SOUTH WALES NEWS**

p11c(W)

### OUR READERS' VIEWS

#### WORLD TRIBUTE TO THE LATE KING

**Sure rock While Europe Treads On  
Shifting Sands**

From the rev Gwilym Davies

**GREATEST EVENT OF HIS REIGN**

**Effort for Constructive Peace**

Sir, - Of the countless tributes to the life and work of King George V. none touched some of us more than that of Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet. "This", he wrote, "is more than the loss to British subjects of their Sovereign. It is a loss to the whole world of a genuine and a great lover of world peace."

It was the same feeling that urged the members of the Council of the league in session at Geneva to hold a special meeting in memory of King George. Every delegate from every country represented on the Council spoke of the world's loss.

And Mr. Eden found the fitting word in reply when he said, "We live in a time of storm and stress; we tread wearily on shifting sands. But to us in our country there has been one sure rock - the personality of our King."

1 February, 1936

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p81-82(W)

### A LAND MADE FOR POETRY NEW INDIA'S HOPES AND FEARS

Indian vernacular literatures look back upon a century of continually increasing activity which began with the impact of English thoughts and education. India's rulers needed a staff of bilingual subordinates, and knowledge of English became the road to employment and possession of the West's secret of superior strength. Our difficult and wayward language has been mastered by Indians on a scale of achievement to which the world can show no parallel. Nevertheless, this achievement exacted its price, just as in Ancient India the attention to grammatical and phonetic subtleties which built Sanskrit into its ordered and majestic perfection did, absorbing far too much of India's mental energy. English literature, recommended by political and economic considerations, was often accepted rather than absorbed, and its influence rarely went to the centre, where imagination is touched and awakened.

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Compare the Indian with the Elizabethan Renaissance. An Athenian of Pericles's time, if Marlowe

had been compelled to speak Greek to him, would doubtless have found the result ridiculous. Shakespeare (on a friend's authority) knew little Latin and less Greek; and that friend, proud as he was of his own command of the classics, never handled them (we may be sure) with the nervous precision and idiomatic ease with which countless Indians have used English. Yet our imaginary Athenian, when he passed from the formal and outward, must have accepted into the canon, as essentially new and entirely lovely, the goddess-form of Faustus's ecstasy, "the face that launched a thousand ships" and Shakespeare's "Mercury", "new-lighted on a heaven kissing hill", and Jonson's "Queen and Huntress, caste and fair". For our poets Greek literature has been a wicket-gate into paradise, not the portals of an employment bureau.

That the new education foreshadowed in Macaulay's famous Minute, almost exactly a century ago, was not altogether helpful to creative artist, Indian themselves recognize. The necessity of receiving almost all instruction through a medium which every moment demanded attention to itself has laid heavy burdens on the mind. It is not strange that mathematics has been the subject in which Indian scholars have found it easiest to win unquestioned reputation outside India, for in this study the strain imposed by an English medium has been lightest. Yet to day, taking stock after a century of Indian literature influenced by English literature, the foreigner finds himself compelled to astonished admiration that so often, and in so many writers, creative imagination has overcome its disabilities, and has taken into Indian literature not merely the formal but the essential. English literature has been read in deplorable anthologies. The selection of set books has often been unfortunate. Commentaries have been bewilderingly dark. Students have been presented with categories - romantic, Classical and so on - which have been meaningless to a people whose own literature has been neither romantic nor classical, but in the main of one sort only, devotional and religious. Yet genius has repeatedly escaped the schools or neutralized their influence.

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The first great poet of modern India, Michael Madhusudhan Datta, is an example. His mind seized all it needed of English scholarship, which was ample enough to enable him to write a harmless imitation of Scott in English verse, "The Captive Ladie". Then, wisely turning to his own vernacular, he naturalized in Bengali the sonnet and blank verse; and in his epic, the "Meghnadbodh Kavya" ("The Death of Meghnad"), he boldly naturalized also Milton's (alleged) heresy in making Satan the "hero" of "Paradise Lost". "I hate Ram and his rabble", he wrote, "Ravana" (The demon king of Ceylon, the abductor of Sita) "was a fine chap". Michael (the name was adopted when he adopted Christianity) made himself great by instinct of unconscious insight. He seems to have been the first to perceive that Bengali was weak in what makes rhythm in Western languages. It was (like Indian music) essentially melodic, apt to make its appeal by a broken and separate music, rather than by deeper tones threaded into one pervading tone. His Bengali, therefore, was such Bengali as Tagore, in his young days a severe critic of Michael, but throughout his maturity a strong admirer, has said was "Not Bengali, Michael looked out sounding Sanskrit words and set them together". It is interesting to notice that this style, which (as Tagore said) could not be followed, however delightful Michael's imaginative energy made it, is in our own time being again (not imitated, but) revived, by one of the most individual of the younger poets, Mr. Suddhindranath Datta. We shall return to this poet presently. What must be now noted is that not merely the tremendous music of Sanskrit, which had been asleep for centuries, rushed into life again in Michael's pictures of Gods and their foes in conclave and in conflict, but the stormy valiance of his own imagination swept into Bengali verse, driving out the languor and softness which are its besetting faults.

Michael had a contemporary, whom his countrymen ranked as in prose his equal. Bankimchandra Chatterji, "the Scott of Bengal." Bankim's imagination could take a hint, such as is given in that mysterious episode of Warren Hastings's early governor-generalship, the incursion of Sannyasis, "the gipsies of Hindostan", and out of these and tradition he could make a story beside which the strictly prescribed and always unreal adventures of gods

and demons seemed anaemic. As with Waverley novels, delight was instantaneous. Bankim discovered also the pathos and humour of ordinary life, and, just as the passage of a century has left undiminished the reality of Baillie Nicol Jarvie, Andrew Fairservice, Dugald Dalgetty and their fellows, so it has left as true as they ever were the world of struggle and courage revealed in the opening scenes of "Devi Chaudhurani" and the psychological revelation of "Kapalakundala".

\* \* \*

Then came Rabindranath Tagore: and in him we span the generations between the beginning of modern Indian literature and what that literature is doing to-day. There is, fortunately, no need to assess his achievement yet. One or two things, however, need saying. The first is, that no poet has ever more closely followed the life of his own time with more quick and various and catholic in interest; the second is, his metrical ease and mastery must surely be in their kind unique. It is no wonder that he continues to overshadow Bengali literature. His name obtrudes on every discussion, and even those who are vexed with his work cannot get away from it. The War had hardly ended when he broke new ground with the delightfully urbane and gracious movements of "Lipika", prose pieces opening with an adaptation of Lucian's "Dialogues" to the Hindu Olympus: and with "Muktadhara" ("The Free Current"), his most effective use of allegory in drama, expressing that menace of the Machine which to-day all countries have learnt to dread.

Those in the West who think of him as "a mystic" are as far astray as could be. His senses are too alert, too troubled with every movement of the world outside India, for him to be so dismissed. His "Letters from Russia", published half a dozen years ago, were (as he himself would admit) too pervadingly enthusiastic. But this testified a curiosity which time could not deaden, and a detachment which tried all things, however alien to Indian or British tradition and practice. His latest book of verse, published last year, "Bithika" ("Avenues"), is a vivid witness to the abundance which Dryden experienced in his old age, when thoughts came upon him so rapidly that his trouble was

whether to versify them or "to run them into the other harmony of prose". Tagore has solved his own problem by using an entirely individual freedom and ease of verse, as if he felt he has been its master for so long that now he was emeritus from the rules that other poets must observe, and might break canons when and how he chose. The metre moves into the fluency of unquestioning obedience, the diction draws on a lower stratum of colloquialism than even his former extremely free practice allowed, as if it needed no dignity except its own imperious serenity. Yet the diction can suddenly stiffen, the metre can gather itself into majesty.

\* \* \*

Such reckless mastery is accompanied by dangers. Writing for himself and letting thoughts slide in sequence as they come, Tagore frequently permits an image to become a mere "centre of diffusion". For example, "Bithika" opens:

To-day I made friendship with the mighty Past,  
where it sat in meditation at day's finish, in the formless  
land.

Then this motionless Ascetic bewilderingly passes into shrewd and ubiquitous activity; sets the stars alight, rekindles "forgotten hines of dead life," with the sunset pigments, creates such cave-pictures as primitive man has left, weaves his matted locks a garland! Here is profusion and confusion, and with repetition of imagery that he has used a hundred times the poet has smothered his new and striking thought of aboriginal cave-dweller in each one of us, the self who makes dim pictures in the depths of personal being. But for the reader of the Bengali all criticism is forgotten in the starting truth of three words which have the sharpness of recollection that marked Robert Bridges's last poems. When the Indian spring dying, burnt out by the intruding first hot days' you will walk into pockets of hanging sweetness - scent of mango or neem intensified into ineffable richness as the flowers are about to fall. Into just such a pocket does the reader walk, when Tagore's Ascetic weaves his garland "out of the arrested fragrance of spring that has drooped."

\* \* \*

In a lighter poem, the poet, referring to the Hindu fourfold division of life, playfully remarks (rhyming "twinkle", "thrice", with "cynical") that he has passed through his first three stages and has come to the fourth one, "the Cynical stage"; he recommends his mind to bring with it a rope and water-pot (as a weight) and drown itself as "Mid Victorian" the word rhyming with "dori an" ("bring a rope"! ). A considerable section of Bengali opinion holds that the "cynical age" has come upon the Indian world, in the work of those younger poets who are Tagore's friends and in some measure his disciples, the *Panchaya* group. One of these, Sudhindranath Datta, we have already mentioned. He is the editor of *Parichaya* (Discussion), a periodical appearing six times a year. His poetry is found exceedingly difficult by his own countrymen, and must be left to their judgment. It is experimental metrically, ranging from orthodox sonnets (as introduced long ago by Michael) to verse of a line widely varying in length; but its texture is always close, its diction Sanskritic and deep-sounding. It is the poetry of abstract ideas, exceptionally free form allusions. These, when they occur, reinforce the sublimity of loneliness which pervades Mr. Datta's latest book. "Orchestra"; the English title which he has used suggests, probably not accidentally, that he is trying to find a more richly complicated music than comes easily to Bengali.

*Panchaya* marks the definite passing of Indian literary criticism into the modern world. Under the editorship of Mr. Datta, a clear and vigorous prose-writer, it has set itself ahead of anything else in Indian periodical literature, in catholicity, range, intelligence and freedom from prejudice. The current number finds space for a long discussion of Fascism and for articles on the Chinese renaissance and Hindu minor philosophical texts; for detailed notice of such English poets as Mrs. Daryush, Mr. Hugh McDiarmid and Mr. R.C. Trevelyan, and a particularly close examination of "The Rock" and "Murder in the Cathedral". (Mr. Eliot is getting a good deal of attention from Indian poets just now; Tagore, not long since, published a brilliant translation of "The Journey of the Magi"). The reviews we have mentioned show

that some British publishers have discovered that there is an English-reading public in Bengal, who are not content with that small selection from our literature that is popular enough to find its own way to Calcutta bookshops.

*Panchaya* now has a companion periodical, *Kavita* (Poetry), for verse only. Its first number sets itself with equal distinctness apart from the mass of traditional verse still being produced, the numerous books entitled "Flower-Garlands", "A Chaplet of pearls", or (more briefly) just "Mother". Its opening poem, by Mr. Premendra Mitra, well known already as a novelist, contrast the mechanical universe, "this dance of electrons", with the vivid and variegated show of illusions in which it reaches our senses, another poem, by Mr. Samar Sen, has for title Mr. Ezra Pound's "Amor stands upon you".

Where'er you go,  
In stillness of some startled moment, Know!  
Your breath will catch, to hear, with sudden dread,  
Of Death the muffled, undelaying tread!  
Having my side, you hope to go — ah, where?  
Where'er you fare—  
On Leda's shining breast, from heaven's expanse,  
Falls Jupiter's keen glance!

Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot — another name that casts its shadow on these young Hindu poets is that of D.H. Lawrence. These influences are not solely emancipating. The *Panchaya* poets are in danger of picking up an appearance of imitation, and tricks and mannerisms — Mr. Eliot's habit of repetition as an incantation is growing on them. Sometimes the old and traditional reassert themselves alongside the new, as when Mr. Sen seems to mingle Lawrence's passionate earthiness and violence of imagery with the night of warm drowsy fragrances.

The dark came like a beast of prey. The burning  
sky of the west reddened like an oleander blossom.

That darkness brought to the earth the scent of  
*ketaki* flowers, and to the eyes of some the languorous  
dreams of night. That darkness lit the trembling  
flame of desire in a girl's soft body.

\* \* \*

Bengal is a land made for poetry, in its double simplicities – its two Bengals, that of the Ganges, immense and legendary, and that of the *sal*-forested uplands. Its people live with sense of boundless horizon; the word *diganta*, which may usually be translated “horizon,” is rarely long away from Bengali poetry. It is a word which almost seems to spring of itself, in that country of white skies preparing for the sun’s precipitate setting, and of vast sandy river-beds and rolling plains and fields. Dawn comes with a shout and upleaping, and dusk falls almost with a downward plunge. “Darkness,” wrote Mr. Sen, in a characteristic passage, “descended on memory’s horizon, and a wind of forgetting rushed in along the dusty pathways.”

The language, too, has poetry in it, a wealth of beautiful words still close to the primitive life that created them, words often onomatopoeic and always expressive and musical. Another *Parichaya* poet, one of the most distinguished of Bengal’s younger writers, Mr. Buddhadeb Bose, is particularly alive to the value of these words, and uses them to prick out his verse with a sparkle and point of light and colour. An example is his poem (in *Kavita*) expressing the ecstasy of early morning on the Chilka lagoon, where the very ripple and brightness of the tiny waves enter with the words, “*chilka utche jhulke*.” He is sometimes, like his friends, in danger of being almost too learned a citizen of the world, of knowing too many literatures and legends. On page 7 of *Kavita* are lines that might almost have been written by the dream-drowsed Rabindranath Tagore who died half a century ago (having written his “Morning Songs” and “Evening Songs”); on contiguous pages appear a fine appropriation of the Bible story of the rainbow above the subsiding Flood, and “the green evening star”, which the reader trying to recall Indian sunsets may think perhaps came there from our lingering northern evenings and from Coleridge’s “Dejection” Ode (concerning which Byron asked his famous question, “Who ever saw a green sky?”).

Indeed, these poets are so alive to the present age and to the literatures of all lands, that their work bears continual the mark of men now exploring, now engaged in wide-extending forays. But we may surely say of them what Lowell said of the Keats of “*Endymion*” :

“Happy is the young poet whose work has the saving fault of exuberance, if it have also the shaping faculty which will sooner or later amend that fault”. They represent a movement which will change the thought of Bengal, and through Bengal that of India.

\* \* \*

We have written of Bengali literature, for this was the pioneer literature of modern India, and it is still the most active and most emancipated. But outside Bengal there are writers who are changing their land’s outlook, and making “the unchanging East” a place volcanic with continual movement. Not all the changes are good. As Mr. Kelkar, the distinguished Maratha writer, has pointed out, “The Brahmin’s day is over. But the Brahmin did stand for a culture.” Indian writers have many difficulties to overcome, difficulties inherent in social and political conditions, difficulties due to the far too great inheritance of words and phrases and imagery that have been worked threadbare of all meaning long ago. These last beset even the most modern and alert of them, who are still apt to slip into modes of thought and expression that are customary and otiose – the Indian writer talks too readily of darkness, vastness, fragrances, and his nature is full of a not very moving tearfulness. But the worst enemy of all (like Amor) now stands upon India. In 1927 there were less than a hundred of the small ramshackle cinema “outfits” that travelled round by car; in 1934 there were no fewer than 1,236.

The greatest change in India of the last dozen years has been the penetration of rustic areas by the motor-bus. This and its colleague the motor-car (“any only car”) are going to take into these areas the cinema, and the worst kind of films; in five years the mind of rustic and agricultural India is going to be remade. Hitherto it has been only the cities that the cinema has touched. Even so, India has already got what it is not unfair to call “the Hollywood mentality”, as taste for the worst American films, those which are as bad as the best American films are good. The films which India herself is producing go one better, and their advertisements flaunt every sexual and criminal extravagance with a fervour and floridity that are unknown with us, bad as we can often be. The Brahmin’s

day is gone, says Mr. Kelkar. But very soon the day of English culture, too, may be gone.

Both cultures, with all their faults rendered great service. English culture did for India something comparable to what Roman culture did for mediæval Europe, giving her a community of intellect such as obtained when an Erasmus was equally at home in Padua, Paris or Oxford. The Indian or Englishman who has accepted this community, without resentment on the one hand or patronage on the other, has been equally at home in Calcutta, Poona, Lucknow or Madras. Political rearrangements are going, inevitably, to break up this community of understanding, and India must develop along the lines of her vernaculars and separate nationalities. In this, though urbanity and width of outlook may be lost, there will be compensations of intensity and strength. But in the cinema the new developments are threatened by a danger which cannot be exaggerated, before which both the Islamic and Hindu civilization might go down.

While Indian culture remained on an All-India basis, there has been one paper, *Truveni*, a periodical published in English in Madras, which has made a gallant fight, during years when militant political nationalism has drowned all other voices, to remind Indians of their cultural heritage. It has recorded the progress of all the vernacular literatures, and has rendered a high patriotic service. But a solitary fighter cannot win without reinforcements. India is a continent in herself, and to gain her due place into the outside world's respect she must preserve her spiritual autonomy, which she can do only by keeping her ancient variety and her recent unity from being both swamped by a featureless vulgarity.

We suggest that the time has come for some lover of Indian civilization to endow a Nobel Prize for her vernaculars, to be given to some outstanding writer - to a Tagore or Iqbal, a Sarat Chatterji, a Kelkar, a Divatiya; and a Hawthornden Prize, to encourage works of imagination by writers not yet established. Is it not time, too, that there was an Indian Academy of Arts - not solely consisting of scholars, but including creative writers also? In such ways the best may yet be strengthened into bulwark against to sweep over India, and the creative and cultured centres of all India, whether Islamic or Hindu, may be knit together. Last of all, India's connexion with our land and language is still to a

large extent her outlet to the wider world, and we are linked in the bonds of a common citizenship with her. Her literary achievements cannot be a matter of indifference to us.

8 February, 1936

**DAILY EXPRESS**

p10c7(D)

**By the Way**

**by Beachcomber**

*Non e il mondam romore altro che un fiato Di vento ...*

And yet men will imperil their immortal souls for an hour of fame. And what is fame? I remember reading long ago an indignant article about some festive occasion when Miss Mary Pickford and Sir Rabindranath Tagore were both present. The crowd mobbed the actress, and nobody recognised the poet. The writer concluded that people preferred films to poetry, and he was right.

10 February, 1936

**THE STAR**

p4c4(D)

**Section: THE STAR MAN'S DIARY**

**Tagore's Pen Pictures**

TWO remarkable pictures produced from the fountain pen of the poet Rabindranath Tagore will be hung this week in the Town Hall at Croydon.

The poet has started "painting" with his writing pen at the late age of 73. His pictures have been exhibited at Berlin, New York, London and Moscow. They are greatly praised by futurists.

Tagore, it seems, does not start painting with a definite subject. He scribbles with ink, and gradually a picture appears.

22 February, 1936

**THE STAFFORDSHIRE WEEKLY SENTINEL**  
p14c1(W)

**Section: UTTOXETER AND DISTRICT NEWS.**

**Rotary Club**

"Rabindranath Tagore, Indian Poet and World Patriot" was the figure around which the Rev. R. Hughes wove an interesting address at the weekly meeting of Uttoxeter Rotary Club. Tagore, a member of a princely family, paid his first visit to England in 1912-13 when he published his English translation of "Gitanjali", a collection of short poems. The book created quite a sensation and attained a wider popularity in this country than in India itself. Among many marks of appreciation that came to the author he was knighted by the late King George. Since the war the basis of his school, or "Ashram," has been broadened so that it has become a home of brotherhood and peace, where East and West may meet in a common fellowship of study and work. While passionately devoted to his own country, and proudly convinced that India has a distinct contribution to make to the new world-order, Rabindranath Tagore disapproves of the non-co-operation movement. The thanks of the Uttoxeter Rotarians was fittingly expressed by Rotarian W. E. Elkes. The Chairman was Mr. T. W. Orme (President).

24 February, 1936

**THE DAILY MIRROR**  
p9c1(D)

**Section: NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE**

**Indian Artist to Paint Portrait of The King**

I UNDERSTAND that Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, whose series of "Arabian Nights" was greatly praised at Burlington house last year, is coming soon to London.

While in England he will, I hear, paint a portrait of the King. Several of his paintings, notably one of a famous Buddhist Queen, are already in Queen Mary's possession.

Dr. A. Tagore is a nephew of the famous poet, Rabindranath Tagore, and has a son resident in London.

24 February, 1936

**THE EVENING STANDARD**  
p6c1(D)

**Section: INDIAN VISITOR**

ABANDINDRANATH TAGORE, nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet, and himself a well-known artist, will shortly be visiting London.

In India Abanindranath Tagore has a house at Santiniketan, the settlement near Calcutta that was founded by his uncle. In this settlement lives a miscellaneous international collection. It includes a co-education school. A Swedish woman instructs



**Fig. 46 A Cartoon by Vikky**  
*The Evening Standard*, 24 February, 1936, p6

the hand-weaving class, and everyone salutes the dawn with folk songs and dances.

### **Famous Family**

The Tagore family has for several generations been the centre of cultural life in Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore's grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore, and his father were leaders of the Brahmo Samaj movement to reform Hinduism; his sister, Mrs. Ghosal, is a Bengali novelist; and another of his nephews, Gogenandranath Tagore, has made a name for himself as an artist.

The work of the two nephews is characteristic of Santiniketan – Oriental in conception and Occidental in execution. Abandindranath is best known for his illustrations of fairy stories and the Arabian Nights, and Gogenandranath [sic.] for his savage caricatures.

A study of RABINDRANATH TAGORE by Vicky.

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*27 February, 1936*

### **GREAT BRITAIN AND THE EAST**

p276(W)

### **EMPIRE BROADCASTING NOTES.**

Poems, songs and literary works of Sir Rabindranath Tagore have been selected for a composite programme of verse and music to be broadcast in Transmission 3 on March 27 at 4 p.m. G.M.T.

The Marquis of Linlithgow, Viceroy-Designate of India, will be the guest of honour at a banquet to be held under the auspices of the Royal Empire Society, on March 25. Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, will preside. Speeches by the Viceroy-Designate and the Secretary of State will be broadcast in Transmission 4 at 9.5 p.m. G.M.T., and again in Transmission 3 on March 26 at 3.45 p.m. G.M.T.

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*12 March, 1936*

### **THE DAILY MIRROR**

p11c4(D)

### **Section: NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE**

#### **Tagore on the Air**

RABINDRANATH Tagore, the Indian poet, is to broadcast for the first time, I understand, on Empire Day. The broadcast is being organised by Lionel Fielden.

The poet will speak from his seminary in Bengal, and will be heard in every part of the Empire.

He will recite a poem he has recently written called "My Mission Before the Machine Guns."

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*15 March, 1936*

### **REYNOLDS NEWS**

p11c4-5(W)

### **LAND OF MYSTERIES TO LEAD EMPIRE DAY BROADCAST**

#### **"REYNOLDS" CORRESPONDENT**

THE real Hindustan, land of mysteries, gods and tigers, will be on the air for listeners on Empire day, May 24.

On that day India is to contribute the main programme, and, as forecast exclusively in "Reynolds, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the world's richest man, will broadcast.

Arrangements are now almost complete.

Following a speech by Lord Linlithgow, listeners will hear the beautiful recital of the great poet, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, the first and only Asiatic Nobel Prize winner in Literature, and the Poet Laureate of Asia.

The Indian poet will recite one of his most beautiful and latest poems, "My Mission before the Machine guns."

#### **IN MANY LANGUAGES**

It will be followed by music in different Indian languages – in Bengali, Hindu, Urdu, Marathi, and

Guzerathi - and the playing of different Indian musical instruments, of which there are 35.

There will be acting by Devika Rani, the beautiful heroine of the first Indian talkie, "Karma", produced in London.

The bazaar scenes of the main Indian cities - Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras - will also be broadcast

Prayers in a Muslim mosque and in a Hindu temple will also be heard, as well as the Voice of the Minaret and the ringing of the temple bells.

[contd. p13c4]

### WORLD PEACE MEET

#### Famous Authors Issue Call For Paris Gathering

##### Special to "Reynolds"

Promoted by M. Romain Rolland, the noted French author, a world peace conference is to be held in Paris in May.

Leading figures behind the movement include Gandhi, the famous Indian poet Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Einstein, and Mrs. Despart, the well-known feminist.

16 April, 1936

**THE STAR**

p2c6-7;D

### LITERARY PROFILES

By JOSS

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Bengal's poet-philosopher... Nobel prize for Literature, 1913 knighted 1915 ... Threatened to relinquish title in protest against Indian Government policy ... Has written and set to music 3,000 songs ... Runs International university near Calcutta .. Last year, aged 74, wrote English poem on "Woman."*

6 July, 1936

**SUSSEX DAILY NEWS**

p3c7;D

### SHOREHAM CHURCH PAGEANT

A pageant and dance display took place at St. Mary's hall, Shoreham, in aid of the Church

of the Good Shepherd, Shoreham Beach, on Saturday.

"Sacrificed,"[sic.] an Indian costume play by Rabindranath Tagore, was produced by the Vicar, the Rev. R. C. Filler, M.A., Hon. C.F., and there was every cause for congratulation. Those playing their parts well were Violet King (Queen Gunavente), Daisy Pocock (the King's brother), Ursula Pierce (the servant), while the role of the priest of the temple was an outstanding performance. Vera Pashley, as a beggar maid, was very satisfying. Miss Adele Jouanno's orchestra, gave great pleasure. After tea, a flower ballet arranged by Madame Fralinski, of the Sussex Academy of music and Allied Arts; a maypole dance by the



**SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

Fig. 47

*The Star*, 16 April, 1936, p2

4th Shoreham girl Guides; and a minuet and classical dance by pupils of Madame Fralinski, gave great pleasure.

Miss Adele Jouanno's orchestra provided the incidental music.

After tea a flower ballet was arranged by Madame Fralinski, of the Sussex Academy of Music and Allied



**PAGEANT AT SHOREHAM.**—Performers who took part in a pageant at St. Mary's Hall, Shoreham, on Saturday, in aid of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Shoreham Beach.

**Fig. 48** *The Sussex Daily News*, 6 July, 1936, p3

11 July, 1936

#### **BRIGHTON AND HOVE HERALD**

p26c4(W)

#### **CHURCH PAGEANT AT SHOREHAM**

##### **Indoor Event at St. Mary's Hall**

OWING to the inclement weather on Saturday afternoon, the pageant in aid of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Shoreham Beach, was held in St. Mary's Hall, Shoreham, instead of as arranged in the open air.

"Sacrificed," [sic.] an Indian costume play by Rabindranath Tagore, was produced by the Rev. R. C. Filler, M.A., Hon. C.F., and right well the performers acquitted themselves in their difficult roles. Among those taking part were Miss Violet King (Queen Gunavente), Miss Daisy Pocock (the King's brother), Miss Ursula Pierce (a servant), and Miss Vera Pashley (a beggar maid). Another fine performance was that of the temple priest.

Arts; a maypole dance was given by the 4th Shoreham Company of Girl Guides; and a minuet and classical dances were given by Madam Fralinski's pupils.

16 July, 1936

#### **BELFAST NEWS-LETTER**

p11c5(W)

#### **APPEAL TO ENGLISHMEN'S CHIVALRY INDIAN POET DENOUNCES COMMUNAL AWARD**

##### **"WIN US BY FAIR PLAY"**

**CALCUTTA, Wednesday.**

An appeal to the "chivalrous humanity of the Englishman" was made by the Indian poet, Rabindranath

Tagore, when presiding at a record gathering of Bengal Hindus to discuss the British Government's communal award determining the allocation of seats in the Indian Provincial Legislatures to the different communities and the method of election of members.

The poet described the policy of the award as "wrong-headed statesmanship," and said that ever since the proposal was made the atmosphere of the province (Bengal) had become "turgid with passion." Without wishing to deny the Muslims the benefit of their numbers, of suspecting them of dangerous designs, the poet said the Hindus refused to accept the fate of all future prospects of mutual co-operation being blighted by the scheme, which put premium on communal allegiance at the expense of national interest."

"I shall feel inclined to appeal to the chivalrous humanity of the Englishman, representing the best ideals of western culture" he continued, "I believe that if the people that determine the fate of this country could win our hearts by unswerving fair play it will not only add credit to their civilisation but also be to their worldly benefit in the long run."

The Maharaja of Burdwan, in a message to the meeting, described the award as "more than injustice."

A resolution supporting the memorial recently sent to Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, by a number of Bengal Hindus urging the amendment of the India Act to ensure the giving to certain communities or interests for special rea-

sons a greater number of seats than can be claimed in ordinary circumstances, was unanimously adopted by the meeting, which also appointed a committee to secure the reversal of the communal award.

— **Reuter.**

## GARDEN PLAY



**Ann Firth, who will play the leading part in Tagore's play "Suttee" in a Hampstead garden to-morrow.**

**Fig. 49** *The Evening News*, 29 July, 1936, p6

17 July, 1936

**THE MORNING POST**  
p6c7(D)

### **COMMUNAL AWARD DENOUNCED (FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)**

Calcutta, July 15,

Rabindranath Tagore, the well known poet, was the chief speaker to-day at a huge meeting of Calcutta Hindus protesting against the British Government's Communal Award, determining the allocation of seats in the Indian provincial legislatures to the various communities. Most of the speakers attacked the Award as a measure deliberately designed to punish the Hindus.

Tagore described the Award as the sinister threat of a dissecting blade "hissing while being sharpened, ready to divide the one vital sensitive cord that is to bind our people into a nation."

"The evil of separate electorates," said Tagore, "was made worse by the scheme of weightages, by which communities were differently valued to suit the present mood of the Government. The Hindus

had been handicapped most in the coming Constitution."

2 October, 1936

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p10c3(D)

[contd. p11 and 12/c7 and c1]

## **THE ENGLISH IN INDIA A Criticism**

**Editorial:**

### **England in India**

On another page we publish an illuminating criticism of the English by Rabindranath Tagore; a criticism that holds good not only in India but in all countries over which Englishmen rule. Tagore concedes that the cruelties which have been common, for example, in Indo-China and Libya are not to be found in India, or at least that public opinion in England is less likely to tolerate those that do occur. But, unfortunately, most Englishmen are contented once they have reassured themselves that they are not sadists. They are irritated when men with such fine characters as Lord Cromer or Lord Irwin are accused of ruling on the principle of "divide et impera", without realising that this is the most natural interpretation to be put on the conditions in our policy. What we grant in one hand we too often take away with the other. We allow a fairly wide freedom of speech in India, but enforce a censorship of literature which appears to be based on the assumption that all Indians are irresponsible children. Indian students are treated as equals in England by most people, but in India they are everywhere reminded of their position as belonging to a subject race. The standards of conduct which are theoretically those of all English government, and which have won in individuals the admiration of men like Rabindranath Tagore, are incompatible with the partnership of England and India unless there is a far more genuine feeling of equality between Englishmen and Indians than exists to-day. That conditions might be worse is, as Tagore says, "meagre consolation," and as Governments in other parts of the world become progressively less civilised there is all the more reason for Englishmen to show what can be done. It would be a great advance if the principles we profess were less grudgingly allowed to percolate in India.

### **EVILS THAT MIGHT BE WORST India's Own Part**

*(Extracts are here given from a letter written by Rabindranath Tagore to a friend in England under British rule.)*

#### **By Rabindranath Tagore**

The British Empire is pluming itself on its generosity in making over some part of the machinery of the Government of India into our hands. What is distressing me is that the poisonous element mixed in the boon offered to us will continue to work noxiously for an indefinite time to come. It will keep inflamed the communal passions in Bengal, threatening her peace, which is an essential environment for all economic, social, and cultural progress. The Moslems are apparently failing to realise that an unbalanced politics will never serve their own interest for long; that the communal split amounts to cutting at the root of national life.

You know, and I have never tried to keep it secret from anyone, that of all the Western peoples who have direct dealings with races I respect most the British people. Many things have recently happened in our country to wound us to the quick, in the doing of which British agents were concerned, but of which it is forbidden to speak. These have embittered the hearts of our countrymen at large, though the punishment has fallen only on our youths. In spite of it all, I still say that it will not do to isolate such events when coming to our own judgment of the British people.

### **RULERS, BRITISH - AND OTHER**

There are other great nations in Europe who exercise dominion over foreign peoples. And we cannot but heave a sigh of relief whenever we recall that it is not they who are our rulers. What I am writing to you now, and the freedom with which our representatives in the Legislatures expatiate on the shortcomings of the Government, would

not have been possible under the domination of any other European nation which hold subject races under its autocratic grip. We admire the United States from a distance, because we have no relations with her. But, apart from her inhuman treatment of the Negroes, the instances of rank injustice perpetrated by her highest courts of law are such as do not fortunately belong to our normal experience in India.

When our rulers are annoyed, however contrary they may act, for the time, to their true national character, they cannot altogether get rid of all sense of shame. For, in the nation to which they belong, they have noble personalities who, by that very fact, are its truest representatives, to whose judgment they cannot but defer, although they try to come, when irritated, close to the blood and iron methods with some superficial modifications. Nevertheless they cannot come down to the point of saying "We shall do just as we like" - as the Badshahs and Nawabs of old used to say, as some of our ruling chiefs of to-day would like to say, and as the Fascist nations of Europe are actually saying. Here, when we complain of the frightful conditions prevailing in the Andamans, then, even to such weaklings as we are, they are impelled seriously to report with benevolence beaming from their faces that the Andamans are as beautifully perfect from the moral and physical point of view as could be desired for the condemned. Had those Englishmen whose practice departs widely from English ideals been capable of openly insulting those ideals, how few of the speakers in our legislative bodies would have remained outside that "penal paradise"?

### BRITISH FREEDOMS

I have seen many great Englishmen. They never hesitate to stand up against wrong, whether done by others or by their own countrymen. These may not be statesmen, for statesmen are not usually to be reckoned as the true representatives of the nation. If the persons wielding political power in England had been able to ignore the silent judgment of the great minds in their country they might have succeeded in levelling to the dust all the best canons of humanity - as has been done in Germany and Italy, and as might have been done in

England if the new-fledged Fascists there would have been fully populated and the key of the speeches in our Legislatures pitched several tones lower - as in the case of Germany and Italy.

I must admit that my admiration of British character, in so far as that character is reflected in the governing of India, with its penal system, whipping, and solitary cell, does not come to much more than a comparative statement. It is inhuman enough for us, as you must have found from the narrative of Jawaharlal's prison experience and also from numerous instances of political prisoners, in the prime of their youth, coming out to die after a few years of gaol, miserably broken down in health and spirit. And it is but meagre consolation to us to think that it could even have been worse according to the present standard of civilisation that prevails in a large part of the west.

### INDIAN POVERTY

Some of our countrymen are annoyed with me and ask: If you have such high respect for the British people, why do you not hanker for a perpetuation of their rule? My reply is that thus to be drawn into the widespread net of a foreign Imperialism can never be good for India. It would have been otherwise had this Empire connoted an undivided body politic. But the conditions prevailing in the cowsheds of a dairyman are not to be compared with those obtaining in his homestead. In the former the question is one of the ample production of milk and of getting burdens cheaply carried. If its occupants display their horns in asserting their self-determination no time is lost in bringing home to them their true position.

The chronic want of food and water, the lack of sanitation and medical help, the neglect of means of communication, the poverty of educational provision, the all pervading spirit of depression that I have myself seen to prevail in our villages after over a hundred years of British rule make me despair of its beneficence. It is almost a crime to talk of Soviet Russia in this country, and yet I cannot but refer to the contrast it presents. I must confess to the envy with which my admiration was mixed to see the extraordinary enthusiasm and skill with which the measures for producing food, providing education, fighting against disease were being

pushed forward in their vast territories. There is no separating line of mistrust or insulting distinctions between Soviet Europe and Soviet Asia. I am only comparing the state of things obtaining there and here as I have actually seen them. And I state my conclusion that what is responsible for our condition in the so-called British Empire is the yawning gulf between its dominant and subjugated sections.

On the other hand, it has to be recognised that there is an inevitableness in the fate that has overtaken Hindu India. We have divided and subdivided ourselves into mincemeat, not fit to live but only to be swallowed. Never up to now has our disjointed society been able to ward off any threatening evil. We are a suicidal race, ourselves keeping wide open for ages, with marvellous ingenuity; gaps that we are forbidden to cross under penalty and cracks that are considered to be too sacred to be repaired because of their antiquity.

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8 October, 1936

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p18c4(D)

### **DR. TAGORE'S LETTER**

#### **Great Britain's Opportunity in India**

#### **To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian**

Sir, - I should like to add a few comments from the British point of view to Rabindranath Tagore's article in your issue of to-day.

The British Empire is like a pyramid poised on its apex. Even before the war it was huge in comparison with our own little islands and their relatively small population, and by the peace treaties the area for which its Government was responsible was enlarged by 1,600,000 square miles of added territory inhabited by some 35,000,000 people. It now includes over 70,000,000 more Asiatics and Africans than when the war broke out.

On the other hand, the Irish Free State has broken away to the extent of ceasing to share in the responsibility, the population of Scotland has begun to decrease, and we are approaching the period of a decreasing native-born population in England and Wales, since births, which exceeded 900,000 annually before the war, have now dwindled to less than 600,000 per annum. The basis is clearly too small for the superstructure, and the whole pyramid is threatening to collapse; cracks in its structure are already visible.

If the Empire is to last its basis must be widened; and the growth of national self-confidence and political alertness in India offers us the opportunity of strengthening its responsibility for Indian government to the people of India. Tagore reminds us that Indians do not want to give up the connection with Britain in order to become a prey to the imperialism of Germany, Italy, or Japan, and that is a warning that the imitation of Fascist and Nazi methods of dealing with Indian opposition, for which Tory die-hards crave will bring about a speedy collapse of British rule. It is, as he says, something that Indian representatives are allowed to have their say in the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, but not sufficient when their opinions on matters which vitally concern India (as for example, on the matter of frontier air bombing) are treated as of no significance.

We are in India professedly for the good of the Indian people; people who, in the mass, are appallingly poor. It is an urgent but an extremely difficult task to abate that poverty, one which needs the wisest action supported by the cordial co-operation of all classes of the Indian people. The efforts of the British in the Government services, unaided by such co-operation, cannot succeed; we therefore cannot dispense with the help of sincere Indian patriots of the type of Jawaharlal Nehru. Such men should be heartily welcomed as coadjutors, not persecuted and repeatedly imprisoned for actions which have the material and moral advance of their countrymen as their sole object.

- Yours, &c.,

*Oxford, October 2.*

**GILBERT SLATER.**

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8 October, 1936

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p18c4(D)

**Britain and the Asiatic peoples**

**To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian**

Sir, - May I record my gratification at your publication of extracts from Dr. Tagore's letter in regard to conditions in India and at your illuminating comment on them? As one who was born "a little Conservative" and who has just returned from three years' residence in the Far East, I might add that the publication was opportune in view of the witless motion passed with acclamation at Margate on Thursday, the absurdity of which was made abundantly clear in your leading article to-day.

It should be obvious to all thinking men that such phrases as "faith in Imperial destiny" and "intent to hold what we have" are only calculated, at this juncture, to exacerbate feelings not only in Europe but more certainly in Asia. It is such irresponsible declamations which undermine the efforts of those in authority who really are making sincere endeavours in a distracted world to combine those forces that do exist, and that are making for a unity of international purposes towards a greater welfare for humanity.

The difficulties in Europe are great enough but not insuperable, provided that men and women in this country think quietly and speak wisely. In the East, however, it were well if we realised that a policy of "to have and to hold": by no means spells security. Dr. Tagore's lament from India, after my intimate contacts with schools and universities in Japan and my experiences in the large cities, only makes more poignant the recollection of how little we have given and how much we might give to those whose hands our fashioning not only the destiny of Asia but perhaps of the world. Those peoples of the world whom we may have treated in the past with a beneficent patronage are now demanding rights and privileges which no amount of fortress-building on our part will either induce them to forgo or prevent them from obtaining.

Party leaders in Europe can hypnotise a comparatively ill-informed electorate into admiration

of a foreign policy which is merely the lesser of two evils, and so blind their followers to a greater good and a nobler course yet to be run. The complications in Europe, much magnified by the present political grouping craze, endow the word "expediency" with a most convenient significance. It is thus that foreign policies and the huge rearmament programmes of Europe are made to appear so reasonable. The temporary insanities of Europe, however, need not preclude intelligent activity elsewhere. The East desires to-day not the generous hospitality of a patron but the hand of a friend; not the domineering kindness of an elder brother but the confidence, sympathy, and understanding that go with great friendship. What people have proved themselves more qualified to give it than the British? - Yours, &c.,

*Lancashire, October 3.*

**EDWIN G. HICKS.**

11 November, 1936

**LIVERPOOL DAILY POST**

p7c3(D)

**Rabindranath Tagore**

**COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** London: Macmillan. 12s. 6d.

There was, once a time when strong young men thrilled to the exquisite grace of Rabindranath Tagore's prose-poems. The Gitanjali, the Crescent Moon, the Gardener Collections, with their utter simplicity of style and their deep spirituality, came as a revelation, like dew on leaves outside a tent in the morning. But that was before the war. Since then this frail singer by the wayside, longing for the ineffable presence, seems to have been forgotten in the jarring distraction of a world very much preoccupied with itself. But here in this handsome volume, Rabindranath Tagore's work comes into its own again. It is impossible to say how the strong young men of the present will react to the Easter spell of Tagore's idealism. Perhaps Tagore has supplied the answer himself: "The noise of the moment scoffs at the music of the Eternal." But along

with that, one might quote a hundred other pointed sayings of the poet:

A mind all logic is like a knife all blade. It makes the hand bleed that uses it.

Rockets, your insult to the stars follows yourself back to the earth.

The false can never grow into truth by growing in power.

He, who is too busy doing good finds no time to be good.

The intrusion of this Indian philosopher and poet again, as effected by this new, complete and lovely edition of his work, into the strenuously bewildered world of the West must be welcomed with gratitude.

There is strength in this work, as well as sweetness and simplicity. But it is a sweetness and simplicity that can be imitated only with peril. Perhaps that is the secret of its fascination. It is the inalienable voice of another world.

K.

19 November, 1936

**THE GLASGOW HERALD**

pivc6(D)

**(a special supplement on Glasgow Book Exhibition)**

The "Collected Poems and Plays" of Rabindranath Tagore have been issued by Messrs Macmillan in a handsome volume (12s 6d net). The lyrics of the well-known "Gitanjali," "Gardener," "Fruit-Gathering," and "The Fugitive" volumes are here, with seven plays and the collection of aphorisms called "Stray Birds". The latter will seem to some minds to contain the quintessence of the Indian poet's wisdom and beauty, and to be preferred to the rather soporific lyrics.

27 November, 1936

**JOHN O' LONDON'S WEEKLY**

p357(W)

**POETRY IN OUR TIME**

**MR. YEATS' PERSONAL ANTHOLOGY**

**By GERALD BULLETT.**

[This is a long review of *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, collected and edited by W.B. Yeats. Only the relevant part is included here.]

When I visit a picture gallery, or any other exhibition of works of art, I make rather a point of not attempting to look at everything. Those earnest souls who buy a catalogue and work their way solidly through from alpha to omega, spending three or four conscientious minutes with each exhibit, are made of sterner stuff than I am. My method of procedure is to make a rapid preliminary tour of the rooms, noting the things that have the most immediate appeal for me, and then to retrace my steps and spend as much time as I can spare with each of them, ignoring everything else. There can be little doubt that in this way I miss a great deal of edification; but the gains, I believe, are in excess of the losses. In the long run it is better perhaps to have an intimate acquaintance with a few great works than a superficial acquaintance with many.

Reading, admittedly, is a somewhat different affair; but a similar problem, the problem of how to get at the best before one's receptivity is dulled and one's energy exhausted, does arise when one is confronted with a large anthology of verse, full of good stuff. Such an anthology lies before me now: *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1892-



Fig. 50 *John O'London's Weekly*,  
27 November, 1936, p357

1935, chosen by Mr. W. B. Yeats (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.).

### A break with tradition

The independence of this anthologist's taste is apparent even from a first general survey of the book's contents, and every reader of poetry will be inclined to pick small quarrels with him. Three and a half pages for Thomas Hardy, six and a half for Robert Bridges, five for Mr. Walter de la mare, less than two for Mr. Hilaire Belloc: these seem scanty allowances in comparison with the eighteen pages given to Miss Edith Sitwell, the seven to Lionel Johnson, the six to "AE" (pseudonym of G. W. Russell), the six and a half to Ernest Dowson, and the four and a half to Rabindranath Tagore. Mr. Herbert Palmer is left out. So is Mr. Andrew Young, one of the best and subtlest poets now writing. And so is Mr. Martin Armstrong, whose best work has a delicate urbanity. However, Mr. Yeats does not pretend to have included everyone who might have been worth a place. His book is frankly personal, and the claim implied in the title that it is truly representative of the period it covers must be disallowed. In this respect it breaks with the catholic tradition of the Oxford Books of Verse.

### Enthusiasm for Tagore

There is some warrant for the conjecture that Mr. Yeats has incontinently surrendered to the young and the new, that he has been over-hospitable to poets on whose work the ink is not yet dry. It is arguable, too, that neither these, nor some few of their elders and betters (such as Mr. Eliot), are here seen at their best. Finally, to have done with fault-finding, I fancy there are many, besides myself, who are puzzled by Mr. Yeats's enthusiasm for the work of Rabindranath Tagore, whose *Collected Poems and Plays* (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.) have just been issued in a volume of six hundred pages. When I read a poem by this famous Hindu mystic I frequently find in it the raw material of poetry, but seldom or never poetry itself. The best that one can say is: "This is probably very beautiful in the Bengali original, from which the poet has translated it." The solemn but self-conscious rhythms, the diction that somehow contrives to be at once precious and

commonplace, these do not avail, in my judgment, to give poetic quality to the expression of familiar mystical doctrine. But Mr. Yeats is of another opinion, and one must leave it at that.

Far more important than omissions and misproportions, however, is the quality of what is included. When all is said, Mr. Yeats gives us in this book a rich and exciting collection of good poems, some few very familiar, many less familiar, and a generous sprinkling of pieces which are new, at any rate to me.

28 November, 1936

### THE WESTERN DAILY PRESS AND BRISTOL MIRROR

p8c3rD)

### TO-DAY'S BOOK REVIEW

### COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE. 12s. 6d. Macmillan.

Here is beauty beautifully presented. Some of the world of this famous Indian philosopher-poet, who is also dramatist and novelist, will be familiar to most serious readers, and this finely produced book provides a generous selection that cannot but delight all who love poetry and calm and lovely thoughts. The imagery is rich, Eastern, yet international, since one is reminded not only of the Song of Songs, of Job, and Ecclesiastes, but also (to select two strikingly different examples) of the mysticism of Yeats and the true child-picturing of Milne. Rabindranath Tagore is especially happy in his studies of childhood. "The Post Office", for instance, is an exquisite little play that must move the most trivial reader. Most of the dramatic works would naturally require very different stage treatment from those we know. They are in a different tempo, and, of a world where hurry is not allowed unduly to trespass. This quality of leisure makes such work most valuable for contemplative reading. Thought emerges from thought in surprising loveliness reminding us that the poet has written: "His own mornings are new surprises to God".

5 December, 1936

**THE NORTHERN WHIG AND BELFAST POST**  
p14cl(D)

**COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS**  
**Rabindranath Tagore's genius**  
**THE ORIENTAL OUTLOOK**

Rabindranath Tagore is a poet who, while his genius is characteristically Oriental, has been influenced by Western thought. India has an ancient and remarkable literature, but few of those who have contributed to it are known in Europe. Tagore is, indeed, the only Indian author who has won a reputation among Western readers, and his work is a sealed book to the majority of British citizens. It is to be hoped that his fame in the United Kingdom will be enhanced by the publication of his "Collected Poems and Plays" (Macmillan & Co.; 12s 6d net). This volume of 578 pages contains most of the author's poetic and dramatic work.

Much of Tagore's work reminds one a good deal of the productions of the new-Celtic school. There is the same vague mysticism, the general impression of shadowiness, the glimmers of a light that never was on land or sea. But it is more like the real thing than anything the Southern Irish writers have produced. There is less of the "smell of the lamp" about it; we are not conscious of the same desperate effort to be entirely emancipated from the traditions of a school ladled alien.

"The Stray Birds" are not "poems" according to our ideas of what constitutes a poem. They are rather aphorisms - often not exceeding a single line. Here are a few examples:-

God grows weary of great kingdoms,  
but never of little flowers.

Wrong cannot afford defeat, but  
Right can.

The Perfect decks itself in beauty for  
love of the imperfect.

We come nearest to the great when we  
are great in humility.

The hurricane seeks the shortest road  
by the no-road; and suddenly ends  
in the Nowhere.

He who wants to do good knocks at the  
gate; he who loves finds the gate  
open.

God is ashamed when the prosperous  
boasts of His special favour.

The Great walks with the Small with-  
out fear. The Middling keeps aloof.

"The Gardener" is a richly imaginative rhapsody full of haunting beauty; in which passion finds an expression which seems to harmonise with a typical environment.

The plays are not less characteristic of the East than the poems. The author says that proposals for the production of "Chitra" in Britain have been made, and that he provided stage directions which do not appear in this volume. "Chitra" might not attract British audiences, or those of any European country, though it might for a brief season enjoy a certain success and curiosity. It is remote from our experience and alien to our ways of thought. Nevertheless, it abounds in passages the poetic quality of which is undeniable. And the same is true of the other plays.

11 December, 1936

**THE FRIEND**

p1184(W)

**The Works of Tagore**

**COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS OF**  
**RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Macmillan, 12s. 5d.**

TAGORE does not call himself a Christian. Yet those who are familiar with his writings - and above all with the greatest of those writings, *Gitanjali* - must feel that frequently this "non-Christian" expresses the deepest truths of the Christian world view, in language of extraordinary beauty and profound spiritual insight. "Our Master himself hath joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation, he is bound with us all for ever." "Here is thy footstool and therefore rest thy feet, where live the poorest, and lowliest and lost." "He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust." Such sayings go right to the heart of the purest and loftiest religion.

Then there is the great hymn of acceptance, in which pain is spoken of as God's weapon, and as the highest guardian of honour which God can bestow upon the soul. "From now on there shall be no fear left to me in this world, and thou shalt be victorious in all my strife. Thou hast given me thy sword for adornment: no more doll's decorations for me."

One after another these wonderful poems – if they are only read slowly and carefully – will be found to be filled with the loveliest revealing of spiritual truth. They must be studied over and over again. And we must remember, as we study, that their Bengali originals are sung by peasants in the fields and by children as their play.

Six years ago, when we had Tagore with us at Woodbrooke, he read to us some of these poems, in our Common-room. It was an unforgettable experience; and it is a boon indeed to be able now to obtain in one volume all the greatest and best of these interpretations of the East to the West, and of the West to the West.

**J. S. HOYLAND**

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26 December, 1936

**THE IRISH TIMES**

p5c5(D)

**East and West**

**Collected Poems. By Sacheverall Sitwell. London: Duckworth. 15/-net.**

**Collected Poems and Plays. By Rabindranath Tagore. London: Macmillan. 12/6 net.**

HERE are two poets with little in common except the excellent format of their collections. Tagore is the romantic, picturesque East, something that charms by its unfamiliarity, and which, by its very vagueness, suggests more than it says. Mr. Sitwell is the European intellect, an intellect informed little by the heart and mindful rather of a difficult rhythm than a pleasing cadence.

The work of Rabindranath Tagore is too well known to need quotation here, besides which the length of many of his poems makes it impracticable. He is often at his best and most typical, however, in his pithy, epigrammatic dicta:

"The dry river-bed finds no thanks for its past."  
"If you shut your door to all errors truth will be shut out."

"God kisses the finite in his love, man the finite,"

In this large volume there is little that bores, little that fails to charm; Tagore is a poet who loves God enough to love humanity. He is rich in imagery, rich in invention, rich in poetry; on this book, quite apart from his novels, he takes his place as a most considerable poet.

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29 December, 1936

**IRISH INDEPENDENT**

p4c7(D)

**Poetry of Distinction**

[In this column two books have been reviewed - one is Tagore's *Collected Poems and Plays* and the other one is W. H. Auden's *Look Stranger*. Only the relevant part is cited here]

**Very Precious**

The "Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore" is a very precious book. The first section, "Gitanjali," is a long colloquy between a soul and God, brimming with pure, intense spiritual ardour such as makes splendid the writings of the mystics of Christianity. One may, with necessary reservations, find in them the tone of the Psalmist; and the Eastern mind shows in forceful use of parable, in profusion of images, and in a use of refrain which keeps the secret of its effectiveness.

Not only Divine love is the theme. Love of woman and of child are copiously hymned, recorded, brooded over and prattled about, and with wisdom and grace. In the profound thought and varied forms of the book there are signs of a soul touching the Farther East and West, as well as abiding among the people of his nativity. A book to be read in the leisure of years.

**R.O.P.**

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30 December, 1936

# THE NORTHERN ECHO

p9c3-4(D)

## Rabindranath Tagore's poems and Plays

### The Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore (Macmillan: 12s 6d.)

ONE needs to be in the forties to get this volume into proper perspective. To prewar English letters Tagore came as a sensation. We were not as familiar with Eastern poetry then as the happy labours of men like Mr. Arthur Waley have since made us. *Gitanjali* was the talk of the day. The Nobel Prize in 1913 set a European seal on Tagore's fame; England (which in that year knew so little of its own poetical genius that it could with difficulty find a Poet Laureate) paid homage with a knighthood.

How does Tagore stand after a quarter of a century? It is a question of which Oriental philosophy does not render him careless. Like Flecker stretching out a hand to a poet of the distant future, Tagore addresses the reader of the 21st century:

Who are you, reader, reading my poems an hundred years hence?

I cannot send you one single flower from this wealth of the spring. One single streak of gold from yonder clouds.

Open your doors and look abroad. From your blossoming garden gather fragrant memories of the vanished flowers of an hundred years before.

In the joy of your heart may you feel the living joy that sang one spring morning, sending its glad voice across an hundred years.

That love of natural beauty is the predominating note of Tagore's work; but that personal approach is uncharacteristic. Indeed, an absence of action and characterisation (in the plays as well as in the poems) make him in bulk a little monotonous to the Western reader.

## EXQUISITE EPIGRAMS

But he is full of incidental beauties, and he produces, often, an exquisite thought exquisitely compressed, e.g.

It is the tears of the earth that keep her smiles in bloom.

His own mornings are new surprises to God.

The sparrow is sorry for the peacock at the burden of its tail.

The dust receives insult and in return offers her flowers.

These are the epigrams of a master. Occasionally he fails. "Do not blame your food because you have no appetite" is homely wisdom from the peasant philosopher, hardly a pearl from the poet-philosopher. But few epigramatists can fail less often than Tagore.

The plays especially *Chitra*, have a wealth of lyric charm; but it is the *Gitanjali* poems and the epigrams, we think, to which any reader of the next century turn.

The publishers have made the collection a thing of typographical dignity and beauty.

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1937

15 January, 1937

THE CHURCH TIMES

p68c4(W)

POETS, INDIAN, ENGLISH  
AND AMERICAN

*Collected Poems and Plays.* By Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.)

*The Birth of Song.* By W. H. Davies. (Cape, 5s.)

*Poems.* By Frederic George Scott. (S.P.C.K., 7s. 6d.)

*The Best Poems of 1936.* Edited by Thomas Moulton. (Cape, 6s.)

[Only the relevant portion is incorporated here]

THE great reputation gained by Tagore when "Gitanjali" was first published was largely based on a misapprehension, and the departure of that misapprehension may be partly responsible for a certain decline in his fame. People ignorant of India, and others who should have known better, hailed him as a typical representative of Eastern thought. Tagore, whose father was one of the founders of the Brahma Somaj Movement, which owed much to Christian teaching, is a product, not of India, but of Anglo-India. It is indeed a strange thought that, had Macaulay never planned Indian education, this mystic might never have written. All his work shows traces of Western and Christian influences, as well as of his own India which predominates; but his India is that of the English Raj, just as his thought is that of an Indian educated by European methods.

This volume contains all his poems and plays; and we are sorry to say that it is, except in appearance, a most unsatisfactory volume. We are not told by whom the different books are translated; we are not given the dates of the different works; and in certain places poems are apparently omitted without any explanation. A collected edition should aim to be a help to those who wish to follow an author's development; and it is impossible to do this in this handsome reprint. The best of Tagore's poems are to be found in "Crossings" and "Fruit-Gathering"; of the plays, "The Post Office,"

"Malini," and "Sacrifice," have great beauty, and a dramatic force which will not surprise those who know Tagore's novels...

16 January, 1937

TIME AND TIDE

p85(W)

"LET ME DREAM"

*Collected Poems and Plays.* Rabindranath Tagore. (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.)

Because he has dreamed, and still dreams, of a united Europe and a united India sharing their respective wisdoms to produce a spiritual commonwealth and an active, regenerative peace, Tagore is too often considered only a dreamer. Those who realize what he has done in building up the modern co-operative University at Santiniketan know how much he has accomplished towards the realization of India's contribution. Yet even those fail often to understand the connection between his active participation and his writing.

Most of us must regret, of course, that we cannot appreciate the added beauty and significance which the poems must assume in Bengali, for they are directly evoked by a music which most nearly approaches in Western civilisation, the songs of the Elizabethan lutanists and those of mediaeval province; simple, minor airs to which we are in large measure no longer attuned. (Irish traditional songs and drama afford, perhaps, the closest comparison for us today.) The implicit purpose of such music - it seems too effortless and inevitable to have explicit aim - is not to give satisfaction, but to represent in its frail melancholy a continuous striving after the unattainable. The fact that the English translations of Tagore's work preserve this mood is not only a tribute to his knowledge of the language, but to his true poetic feeling; for to stir Western minds with the memory of a personal spiritual journey they seem to have abandoned in no small achievement.

The flute of Tagore's poetry (Indian poetry is usually composed to this instrument and retains its haunting quality) does not attempt to work out a

## TO AFRICA

IN that early dusk of a distracted age,  
 when God in scorn of his own workmanship  
 violently shook his head at his primitive efforts,  
 an impatient wave snatched you away, Africa,  
 from the bosom of the East,  
 and kept you brooding in a dense enclosure of  
 niggardly light,  
 guarded by giant trees.

There you slowly stored  
 the baffling mysteries of the wilderness  
 in the dark cellars of your profound privacy,  
 conned the signals of land and water difficult to read ;  
 and the secret magic of Nature invoked in your mind  
 magic rites from beyond the boundaries of consciousness.  
 You donned the disguise of deformity to mock the terrible,  
 and in a mimicry of a sublime ferocity  
 made yourself fearful to conquer fear.  
 You are hidden, alas, under a black veil,  
 which obscures your human dignity to the darkened vision  
 of contempt.

With man-traps stole upon you those hunters  
 whose fierceness was keener than the fangs of your wolves,  
 whose pride was blinder than your lightless forests.  
 The savage greed of the civilised stripped naked its unashamed  
 inhumanity.

You wept and your cry was smothered,  
 your forest trails became muddy with tears and blood,  
 while the nailed boots of the robbers  
 left their indelible prints  
 along the history of your indignity.

And all the time across the sea,  
 church bells were ringing in their towns and villages,  
 the children were lulled in mothers' arms,  
 and poets sang hymns to Beauty.

Today when on the western horizon  
 the sun-set sky is stifled with duststorm,  
 when the beast, creeping out of its dark den  
 proclaims the death of the day with ghastly howls,  
 come, you poet of the fatal hour,  
 stand at that ravished woman's door,  
 ask for her forgiveness,  
 and let that be the last great word  
 in the midst of the delirium of a diseased  
 Continent.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

**Fig. 51 Tagore's Poem**  
*The Spectator*, 7 May, 1937, p858

theme to condition of self-sufficiency, it merely provides suggestion, rouses infinite echoing links of imaginative experience. It aims not to produce barren satiety but a fruitful unease.

I am restless I am athirst for far-away things  
My soul goes out in a longing to touch the skirt  
of the dim distance  
O Great Beyond, O the keen call for thy flute!  
I forget I ever forget, that I have no wings to fly,  
that I am bound in this spot evermore.

**L. MOORE**

*31 January, 1937*

**THE OBSERVER**

p14c4(S)

**Section: MUSIC AND MUSICIANS  
ELSE RYKENS**

Else Rykens, who is happiest in Schumann's "Frauenliebe und Leben," sang at Grottrian Hall on Wednesday as tenderly as her programme and her own lively regard for the sense of the poems would allow. Five of Wolf's youthful, recently published Lieder were interesting, not enjoyable except "Sterne mit der goldnen Fusschen" (Heine) with its delicate rhythms and accompaniment. Gretchen's "Arch neige" owes much either to "Das Wirtshaus" or "The Church's One Foundation," and leaves Bernhard Klein's setting still the best. Mme. Rykens also sang two songs by Hans Schouwman, her accompanist. The "poems" were from Tagore's own English prose translation of "The Gardener." Surely the only possible course would be to set the original Bengali to un-accompanied Indian melody?

*1 February, 1937*

**THE MORNING POST**

p4c6(D)

**Section: CONCERTS AND RECITALS  
Else Rykens - Singer-Grottrian Hall**

It was the latter part of the recital by this talented Dutch singer that was heard. Her voice is a thing

of great beauty and at this recital she showed signs of having gone some way to strengthen its two weak points, namely, the tone quality at each of the confines of its range. Her singing was, as we have noted before, extraordinarily pleasant to listen to and her treatment of the songs was always intelligent, possibly there was a hint of the kittenish in her otherwise very clever interpretation of three of Mussorgsky's nursery Songs. It was rather the grown-up foreigner looking on, in some amazement, at the Russian child's nursery life than the child itself at play.

Two songs by Respighi were charmingly sung and two settings from Tagore's "Gardener" by the accompanists, Mr. Hans Schouwman, were also most sympathetically rendered. These last Miss Rykens sang in English, and though we would willingly have heard them in Dutch (there exists a fine Dutch version of Tagore by Van Eeden) it was interesting to hear how well the singer compassed this language of ours.

*16 February, 1937*

**THE MORNING POST**

p12c6(D)

**GODDESS WORSHIPPED IN LONDON**

Indian students and residents in London yesterday for the first time worshipped Saraswati, the goddess of culture, literature, art, and music.

The goddess, a small white figure of a woman, holding a musical instrument like a guitar, was modelled in clay by Mr. B. N. Tagore - nephew of the Indian poet Tagore - a student at the Royal College of Art.

The goddess was placed in a small apartment above the consulting room of Dr. K. C. Bhattacharyya, King's Cross road. Students arrived with offerings of flowers, fruit and dates. After the priest had chanted verse from the Vedas, they joined in the worship. Holy water from the Ganges was sprinkled on the goddess, "bringing the image to life."



**Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet (left), on his way to deliver the Convocation address to Calcutta University.**

**Fig. 52** *The Manchester Guardian*, 6 March, 1937, p11

16 February, 1937

**THE STAR**

p7c4(D)

#### **Section: IN TOWN TO-DAY**

**INDIA IN TOWN:** Worshipping idol, Saraswati Puja, goddess of learning, music. King's Cross-road. Before worship, festival with Tagore play, oriental dances, songs, music, finishing with national anthem, Bande Mataram, Indian Students' Union. Idol made here.

4 March, 1937

**THE STAR**

p1c1(D)

#### **TAGORE'S PERFORMING RIGHTS**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore has joined the Performing Right Society.

Among other new members are Miss Harriet Cohen, Mr. Geoffrey Toye, Mr. Ivor Foster and Mr. Rudolph Starita.

18 March, 1937

**THE EVENING TELEGRAPH DUNDEE**

p2c5(DE)

**Section: HERE AND THERE**

**A Message from Bengal**

Last month, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore addressed the Convocation of Calcutta University, and welcomed the policy recently adopted by the University of making the vernacular of the province the basis of instruction and examination. He said,

"I am here to-day to bring a message of joy and pride from our countrymen, to give voice to their hope that this University of Bengal will find its true glory in gaining intimacy with the people of its province through their natural language."

Dr. Tagore explained -

"Our modern university education has from its inception been parasitic on a foreign tongue, so that though nourishment has not been altogether lacking, it has been obtained at the cost, of all-round development - so much so that it has even to be sensible of its own abortiveness. Brought up to absorb the thoughts of others, the academic success of our students depends on their ability to repeat by rote while their whole faculty of thought, their courage of conviction, their creative inspiration, have all been enfeebled.

"The only way to revival from such chronic debility is by the assimilation and application of the subject - matter of education through one's own language."

There are many Scots who with the advocates of reviving the Gaelic may be interested in the deliverance of Dr Tagore

10 April, 1937

**THE STAR**

p8c3(D)

**Section: IN TOWN TO-DAY**

**LONDON TAGORE SOCIETY:** Just formed by young Bengali admirers of Poet Rabindranath, only

Asiatic Nobel prize-winner in literature ... Active in Society: poet's nephew, Dipak Chowdhury, B B Ray Chandhuri. Already here a Gandhi Society. President, A. FENNER BROCKWAY of I.L.P.

16 April, 1937

**THE BEDFORDSHIRE STANDARD**

p7c7(D)

**Section: A BEDFORDIAN'S DIARY**

THOUGH April skies are grey, and there is a North-East wind, the deep meadows and the woodlands are aglow with their own Coronation pageantry, with colours of blue and gold.

Now is the time when Caliban hies him to Bedfordshire's green pastures for his annual rape of the wild flowers, and his homeward path shows a trail of crushed blue-bells and wilting primroses. I think it is a crime.

What does Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian mystic and poet, say?

"Take to your home what is abiding and strong. Leave the little wild flower where it was born, leave it beautifully to die at the day's end among all fading blossoms and decaying leaves. Do not take it to your palace hall to fling it on the stony floor which knows no pity for things that fade and are forgotten."

17 April, 1937

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

p8c6(D)

**India**

**Sino-Indian Library Opened.** - Messages from leading Oriental savants were read by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet and philosopher, at the opening at Santiniketan, near Calcutta, of a spacious building which will house a library of 100,000 Chinese volumes. The hall is the future home of the Indian section of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society for research work.

22 April, 1937

**THE LUTON NEWS AND BEDFORDSHIRE  
ADVERTISER**

p10c3-4(W)

**Section: MADGE WRITES:  
MAINLY ABOUT WOMEN**

**A Valued Book**

LADY RUSSELL – who returned to Harpenden last week from her six month's tour of India with Sir John brought back with her book which many poetry lovers would like to possess. It is an autographed volume of Rabindranath Tagore's poems, and was given to her by the author during a stay at his settlement at Santiniketan.

Tagore, who is now 77 years old, is a native of Bengal, known all over the world for his literary work. In 1913 he was awarded the Nobel Literature

prize, and in the same year his drama, "Post-Office", was produced at the Court Theatre, London. Recently many of his poems, which are of an Oriental and fanciful character, have been published in English form, and Lady Russell is but one of his numerous admirers in this country.

His settlement at Santiniketan consists of a school and art centre for Indian students. Sir John and Lady Russell were impressed by the high standard of culture which Tagore had attained among his pupils.

I was interested to hear from Lady Russell that among the educated Indians – of whose there are an ever increasing number – English is the language which is commonly used. As the dialects differ so greatly in the various parts of the country, it is not infrequent to hear two Indians using the mother tongue as a means of communication. Esperanto, said Lady Russell was rarely heard



Lady Russell talking to the Bengal poet, Tagore, during her visit to his settlement.

28 April, 1937

# THE LISTENER

p831(W)

[Only the relevant part of the review is printed here.]

**Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan. 12s. 6d.**

**Collected Poems. By Sacheverell Sitwell Duckworth. 15s.**

Two different aspects of poetry are well illustrated in these books: Tagore, vague, poetical and spiritual in an Oriental sense; Sitwell, melodious, visually clear, and witty, the poetry of the amateur of art. Both are, in a sense, heretics: they stress one aspect of poetry at the expense of others. Tagore aims at producing through words a kind of dazed, mystical sense of unity with things:

My thoughts shimmer with these shimmering leaves and my heart sings with the touch of this sunlight; my life is glad to be floating with all things into the blue of space, into the dark of time.

The images are seldom definite or concrete: one is not meant to visualise them too clearly, but rather to be lulled by them as one is lulled by sunshine and a warm breeze and the rustling of branches. The 'thoughts' are the abstractions and generalisations at which one might arrive on the edge of such a mood: 'Men are cruel, but Man is kind'. They are never made specific and memorable through definite images, and the rhythm flows on drowsily, never expressing anything but the one mood. Poetry of this kind is not meant to influence action, or the structure of our waking thoughts: it is a drug, and some people never tire of it.

8 May, 1937

# BRIGHTON AND HOVE HERALD

p6c3(W)

## BOY ACTOR AT THEATRE ROYAL Flying Matinee

THE famous boy actor, Bobby Rietti, gave to an audience at the Theatre Royal on Wednesday afternoon some interesting samples of his considerable

talent. He began with the little two-act play, "Poil de Carotte," which is almost a monologue for him, helped out by a final speech or two by Victor Rietti, beautifully acting the part of the boy's father.

To an English mind, "Poil de Carotte" is so unnaturally emotional as to seem almost maudlin. The cruelty of the mother and the boy's craven terror of her suggest an entirely different mentality from that which we accept even as abnormal.

Bobby Rietti, however, plays the part as if he may at times repel one's reason, again and again he captures one's imagination.

In the quick change recitation of "Toughy goes on the stage," Bobby Rietti was vivid enough, touching melodrama without being spoiled by it.

A series of monologues by Rabindranath Tagore was chiefly remarkable for the rapidity and completeness with which Bobby Rietti and Janet Barrow, as his mother, changed their poses.

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8 May, 1937

# PSYCHIC NEWS

p3(W)

## Tagore Tells How Religion Degrades Itself

### DOGMAS THAT LEAD TO TYRANNY

"When a religion develops the ambition of imposing its doctrine on all Mankind, it degrades itself into a tyranny."

That is the voice of Rabindranath Tagore, India's greatest poet and philosopher, indicating organised orthodox religion at the Parliament of Religions, recently held in Calcutta.

### Following are extracts from his speech:

SECTARIAN votaries of a particular religion, when taken to task for the iniquitous dealings with their brethren, immediately try to divert attention by glibly quoting noble texts from their own scriptures which preach love, justice, righteousness and the divinity immanent in Man, ludicrously unconscious of the fact that those constitute the most damaging incrimination of their usual attitude of mind.

In taking up the guardianship of their religion they allow, on the one hand; physical materialism to invade it by falsely giving eternal value to external practices, often of primitive origin; and moral materialism on the other, by invoking sacred sanctions for their forms of worship within the rigid enclosure of special privileges founded upon accident of birth, or blind conformity irrespective of moral justification.

### **"Impious Activities"**

Such debasement does not belong to any particular religion, but more or less to all religions, the records of whose impious activities are written in brothers' blood, and sealed with the indignities heaped upon them.

*All through the course of human history it has become tragically evident that religions, whose mission is liberation of soul, have in some form or other ever been instrumental in shackling freedom of mind even moral rights.*

It has been the saddest experience of Man to witness such violation of the highest products of civilisation, to find the guardians of religion blessing the mailed fist of temporal power in its campaign of wholesale massacre and consolidation of slavery, and science joining hands with the same relentless power in its murderous career of exploitation.

### **Owning God!**

When we come to believe that we are in possession of our God because we belong to some particular sect, it gives us complete sense of comfort to feel that God is no longer needed except for breaking with the greater unction the skulls of people whose idea of God in some shadow-land of creed, we feel free to reserve all the space in the world of reality for ourselves – ridding it of the wonder of the Infinite, making it as trivial as our own household furniture.

*Such unmitigated vulgarity only becomes possible when we have no doubt in our minds that we believe in God while our life ignores him.*



**Dr. Rabindranath Tagore uses strong language about Orthodoxy's failures.**

**Fig. 54** *Psychic News*, 8 May, 1937, p3

The pious man of sect is proud because he is confident of his right of possession of God. The man of devotion is meek because he is conscious of God's right of love over his life and soul.

The object of our possession needs must become smaller than ourselves and, without acknowledging it in so many words, the bigoted sectarian nurses the implicit belief that God can be kept secured for himself and his fellows in a ceremonial cage which is of their own make.

*Thus every religion that begins as a liberating agency ends as a past prison house.*

*Built on the renunciation of its founder, it becomes a possessive institution in the hands of its priests, and claiming to be universal becomes an active centre of schism and strife.*

### **Choking Man's Spirit**

Like a sluggish stream the spirit of man is choked by rotting weeds and is divided into shallow, slimy pools that are active only in releasing deadly mists of stupefaction.

I say to you: if you are really lovers of truth, then dare to seek it in its fullness, in all the infinite beauty of its majesty, but never be content to treas-

ure up its vain symbols in miserly seclusion within the stony walls of conventions.

Let us revere the great souls in the sublime simplicity of their spiritual altitude which is common to them all where they meet in universal aspiration to set the spirit of Man free from the bondage of his own individual ego, and of the ego of his race and of its creed; but in that lowland of traditions, where religions challenge and refute each other's claims and dogmas, there a wise man must pass them by in doubt and dismay.

I do not mean to advocate a common church for Mankind, a universal pattern to which every act of worship and aspiration must conform.

What I plead for is a living recognition of the neglected truth that the reality of religion has its basis in the truth of Man's nature in its most intense and universal need and so must constantly be tested by it.

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*10 September, 1937*

#### NEWS CHRONICLE

p2c4-5(D)

[This is the report on Goebbles warning to Europe against the Bolsheviks. Only the relevant paragraph is quoted.]

#### "PERVERSE"

"The marriage between Bolshevism and Democracy is quite strange revealing perverse characteristics", said the Minister. (Dr. Goebbles)

Rabindranath Tagore, the Dean of Canterbury, the Bishop of Worcester, and the Archbishop of York were all attacked for their support of Madrid.

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*13 September, 1937*

#### THE TIMES

p11c3(D)

#### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE ILL

#### FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

CALCUTTA, SEPT. 12

Sir Rabindranath Tagore is lying seriously ill at his home at Santiniketan, in West Bengal, suffering from general weakness and erysipelas of the face. There has been no change in his condition during the last two days and he is said to be unable to recognize anyone.

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*15 September, 1937*

#### THE TIMES

p11c7(D)

#### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

#### FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

CALCUTTA, SEPT. 14

Sir Rabindranath Tagore is reported to be much better, though very weak. He is able to recognize and talk with those at his bedside.

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*20 November, 1937*

#### BLACKPOOL GAZETTE

p13c7(W)

#### Section: A WEEK-END THOUGHT

RABINDRANATH TAGORE is an Indian Poet, who has quite often put this point of view, "Give me the strength never to disown the poor, or to bow my knee to insolent might." Tagore is not a Christian, but those who apply in action this thought of his are surely not far from the Kingdom of God.

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2 December, 1937

## THE STAGE

p2c2(W)

Tagore's "Sacrifice" was performed by the Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, on Saturday. In a play that lacks impressiveness and at times becomes tedious, there were some clever and promising performances. M.L. Holland showed both grasp and ability in his portrayal as the priest and Marjorie Smith gave a dignified and restrained impersonation as the Queen. The piece was well mounted.

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3 December, 1937

## WESTMINSTER CHRONICLE

p6c5(W)

### W.M.C. Theatre Group

There were no vacant seats when the Working Men's College Theatre Group, the new organization which displaces their dramatic society, gave a

performance of "Sacrifice," by Rabindranath Tagore, in the Maurice Hall of the College, Crowndale-road, N.W.1., on Saturday. The play was published in 1917 and dedicated "to those heroes who bravely stood for peace when human sacrifice was claimed for the goddess of war." The entire production on Saturday was under the direction of H. H. Balsom.

Marjorie Smith was successful as Gunavati (the Queen), though her dismissal of the King seemed to be followed by an act of thankfulness. M. L. Holland as the Priest did not imitate strong discipline and was not over emphatic. R. E. Brooke, as Brother to the King, was not seem at his best; he had been unable to stand the strain of strenuous work during rehearsal. Anne M. Giogio, as a Beggar Girl, gave a good performance. In smaller parts Master Peter Binnie, as the boy favourite of the King, and Stanley Thomas as Jaising (servant of the Temple), deserve special mention. Credit is also due to W. Boston, the Stage Manager. The effect of the storm was really successful.

The W.M.C. Theatre Group have no need to be disappointed with their first public performance.

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Fig. 55 From a drawing by F. Drummond Niblett in *John O'London's Weekly*, 1937

1938

10 March, 1938

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p20c1-2(D)

**Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

## **THE BRITISH CONNECTION IN INDIA**

### **Dr. Tagore's Fears for the Future**

Sir, - My English friends have done me the honour of inciting my opinion on what, for want of a better term, is being called the "New Constitution for India". Let me first of all make it clear that an entire misapprehension is widely prevalent in the West which presupposes that the federation, now about to be imposed at the centre, will represent something not very far short of complete autonomy. Japan has been making wide use of that word in China. Let us hope that Englishmen will not be content to follow her example by employing it in India in a similar manner.

For let me ask the simple and obvious question, how can a country have autonomy whose people are for the most part disarmed; deprived of control over four fifths of their national purse, and allowed to have nothing to do with their own external affairs? I am sure the British would despise themselves if they had to tolerate even any distant analogy of it in their own homes, or some caricature of freedom offered by niggardly benevolence.

But our rulers are likely to protest that they have nothing but pity and love for us, and that they are painfully enduring the extra burden of governing us only to discharge their sacred duty by maintaining law and order. If some of us are impudent enough to refer them to the balance-sheet of their extended rule and point out that it discloses an unbroken continuity of poverty, ignorance, enfeebled life-force, a steady deterioration in the value of our human capital we are likely to be severely reprimanded. Yet it is not at all difficult for anybody to calculate the amount of positive benefit conferred upon us by our government if he takes care to study the amount of expenditure allotted to education, sanitation and economic improvement

compared to the population of India and then examine its parallel in Japan.

I want to tell the British people quite plainly: So long as you hold us in your grip, you can never have either our trust or our friendship. We know that, in your own homes, you have many kindly virtues, and are admirable for your sense of fair play and human justice. Perhaps for that very reason we find it difficult to understand how the same English people out here can betray your best traditions. But then you have to remember that possession of empire always corrupts, and it has corrupted you.

I am sure that the sensitive minds among you are already feeling that you have gained your imperial prestige at too heavy a price; that the greatness of the end you have achieved is being fast destroyed by the nemesis you have provoked in violating the best part of your nature while achieving it. And I believe you realise that the burden of surfeited empire has dragged you down to that degree of weakness which makes you too timid to be ready adequately to deal with miscreant nations that are defiantly marching against political decency and your own interest and dignity. Those thoughtful and brave individuals among you, who are eager to disown the precarious prestige of an empire founded upon force, are yet far too few in number and too meagerly resourced to retard effectively by the gathering impetus of the blind rush of Power to a self-destructive end.

If you ask my personal opinion I hardly imagine that catastrophe can now be avoided, since the only event in which all the Powers of Europe are engaged in with furious and frenzied zeal seems to be that of paving the path for mutual annihilation. Yet in spite of this I have the hope that misfortune and suffering, if they become inevitable, will not exceed the limits of retribution and bring about a collapse of the entire European civilization; for there is much in that civilisation that is noble and worthy of being cherished. But Fate itself works in blind fits and starts; and one never knows where the nemesis will lead, if we keep on provoking it.

Our own fate in India is still linked up with yours, and though the downfall of your imperial structure may mean a release of our people from its helpless dependence, there are great aspirations

and hopes which we share in common with many noble spirits in your own land and long to see fulfilled. They and we stand united against the deadening and unreasoning elements among your own people as well as amongst ours. It is not that the Indian people stand sworn to enmity against the British people, but that awakened India in communion with awakened Britain is opposed to those blind and sinister powers which are traitors to both.

As regards the New Constitution, it is really not worth troubling about as it stands. It was made by politicians and bureaucrats, who, even as it was being framed, were sending some of our best men and women to prison, mainly without trial. It therefore embodies all their narrow caution and miserly mistrust.

No! It is not through such an artificial structure that any final good can come to us. The future lies in our learning to ally ourselves with those humane forces in the world, wherever found, which are seeking to end altogether the exploitation of man by man, and of nation by nation. Yours., &c.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**  
Santiniketan. February 38.

*10 December, 1938*

**THE NEWS CHRONICLE**  
p3c6(D)

### **TAGORE PAINTING AT EIGHTY**

Poet and philosopher, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, revered in India, has, at the age of 80, begun to paint.

The first English exhibition of his pictures is to be reopened at the Calmann gallery, in St. James's Place, by Lord Zetland.

His first pictures were inspired by the fantastic shapes he absentmindedly made out of the corrections and blots on the manuscripts of his poems. His paintings can best be described as the fanciful sketches of a strange poet drawing "on the margin" of his poems.

*10 December, 1938*

**THE TIMES**  
p10c1(D)

### **SIR R. TAGORE'S ART**

#### **THE METAMORPHOSIS OF BLOT**

Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, opened an exhibition of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's drawings yesterday afternoon at the Calmann Gallery, St. James Place. The exhibition, which is arranged by the India Society, will remain open until January 5.

LORD ZETLAND said that the pictures came from the brush of a very gifted member of a very distinguished family which had played an outstanding part for a hundred years or more in the cultural movements of which India had been the scene, and - might they say? - Bengal the centre. Sir Rabindranath Tagore had taken a leading part in the movement away from excessive devotion towards Western cultural standards and in the direction of a truer appreciation of the literature and art of his own country. His desire to give to his own people education of a kind congenial to the spirit of his own country had led to his founding the Santiniketan ashram, which had grown into a flourishing university, in which scholars of all countries were welcomed as guests.

It surely must be almost unique that a man who throughout his life had given expression to his emotional urges by means of literature, and particularly poetry, should have turned in the evening of his days to another medium of expression - namely, the artistic brush. It was said that he first thought of painting when, on one occasion, he made a blot on one of his literary manuscripts. Desiring, as he put it himself, to give the blot a decent burial, he converted it with his pen into a picture. The development which had since taken place had been truly remarkable, as shown by the exhibition. One of the characteristics of the pictures seemed to be their extraordinary variety. The different types and different styles around the walls gave some indication of the versatility of the poet and artist himself. Lord Zetland added that his hearers must share his own gratitude to those who had given the members of the India Society

the opportunity of going there, in the comparative peace and quiet of a private view, to see this really remarkable collection of pictures.

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10 December, 1938

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p777(W)

**Sir R. Tagore's Paintings**

It is given to few men already famous in one sphere of art to take up another and to achieve distinction in it so late in life as Sir Rabindranath Tagore, an exhibition of whose paintings will be opened this week-end at the Calmann Gallery, 43, St. James's Place.

Sir Rabindranath, who is now in his eightieth year, began to paint twelve years ago, having been fascinated by the strange and fantastic shapes he elaborated from the corrections and erasures in his manuscripts. He still draws his pictures with coloured inks in pen-lines and blots, rarely using a brush. When some of his pictures were shown for the first time in London, at the rooms of the British Indian Union in 1930, he told how the enthusiasm of some artists whom he met in the South of France and who saw his pictures first induced him to exhibit his work in Paris.

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10 December, 1938

**THE YORKSHIRE EVENING POST**

p8c5(DE)

**Section: GOSSIP OF THE DAY**

**TURNED ARTIST BY A BLOT**

Opening an exhibition of Rabindranath Tagore's drawings, in London, Lord Zetland said it must be rare that a man who throughout his life had given expression to his emotional urges by means of literature and particularly poetry, should have turned in the evening of his days to another medium of expression - namely, the artistic brush.

It was said that he first thought of painting when,

on one occasion, he made a blot on one of his literary manuscripts. Desiring, as he put it himself, to give the blot a decent burial, he converted it with his pen into a picture. The development which had since taken place had been truly remarkable, as shown by the exhibition.

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11 December, 1938

**THE OBSERVER**

p10c3(S)

**THE POET'S BATTLE**

**From Our Own Correspondent**

**TOKYO, Friday**

A war of the pen over the merits of the Sino-Japanese conflict has broken out between two well-known poets and old friends, Rabindranath Tagore and Professor Yonejiro Noguchi, who was a guest of Tagore in India in 1936.

Professor Noguchi addressed an open letter to Tagore setting forth the conventional Japanese view of Japan's aims and ideals in China. This letter was printed in a number of Indian newspapers.

Similar hospitality was not shown to Tagore's reply in Japan; but the negative reaction of the Indian poet to Noguchi's arguments was reflected in a brief excerpt which appeared in one of the Tokyo newspapers: "Your open letter is filled with false statements and empty propaganda. What justification can Japan have for killing helpless women and children with bombs?"

Noguchi is now engaged in drafting a counter-reply, which he hopes to publish in leading Indian newspapers. He is quoted in the Japanese press as saying: "India is sympathetic toward China merely because India and China are both weak nations. It takes China's side only because China is an old Buddhist country. If India really desires emancipation it can hope for it only with Japan's help. India is obsessed with British and Chinese propaganda.

"Japan," he continues, "has been mistaken in ignoring its own neighbourhood, devoting too much attention to Europe and America. Japan should have exerted more effort to obtain proper understanding

in India. It is essential for Far Eastern peace that the aims of the 'holy war' should be thoroughly impressed upon the Indian people."

Professor Noguchi's suggestion that India can only obtain emancipation with Japan's help is interesting because of the prevalence of Pan-Asian sentiment here, especially in military circles. It is significant that the name of the new organisation, staffed by representatives of the Army and Navy, which is to maintain, general supervision over Japanese activities in China, is to be, not the China Affairs Board, as was first suggested, but the Asia promotion Board - a hint that its activities may ultimately extend beyond China.

An Indian political refugee, who has become a Japanese subject, Mr. Rash Behari Bose, is head of an organisation here which calls itself the India Independence League. Mr. Bose is an indefatigable lecturer throughout Japan on the alleged sins of British rule in India, and is in close touch with some of the Pan-Asian militarists and extreme nationalists, such as General Iwane Matsui and Mr. Mitsuru Toyama.

12 December, 1938

**WEST LANCASHIRE, EVENING GAZETTE**  
p4c5(DE)

#### **Section: PEOPLE IN THE NEWS**

##### **Turned Artist By a Blot**

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14 December, 1938

**THE DAILY MAIL**

p17c2-3(D)

#### **Tagore's Art Like "Doodling"**

**By PIERRE JEANNERAT**

INDIA'S gifts to England have been many and sumptuous. Among them are the English poems of Sir Rabindranath Tagore.

Looking the part - serene features and snowy beard - of one of the three Oriental kings who knelt at the manger-cradle of Bethlehem, he shines in his 80th year like an embodiment of human moral dignity and gentleness in a torn and tormented world.

At the University of Santiniketan, which he founded, he still teaches principles of harmony in all branches of life, from philosophy to agriculture; he still writes poems; and he finds relaxation in painting extraordinary pictures on silk and paper.

#### **Pictures on Ink**

The coloured-ink pictures resemble to some extent the "doodles" which most of us scribble automatically at odd moments, as during telephone conversation, but Tagore's "doodles" have vast meaning because of his inborn feeling of beauty and the expanse of the mind that directs his hand.

Shown for the first time in Britain at the Calmann gallery, they introduce fantastic creatures, red and blue ghosts in ambient darkness, angular animals, monsters of some other planes which look to me embryos of lyrical inspiration.

"Birds and Bulk", shows a strange egret on a massive quadruped, no doubt suggested by the buffalo and his riding tick-bird so familiar in rice fields, but assuming a monumental importance and profound significance.

The significance becomes clear as you read the two lines penned by Tagore for the drawing:

"Thou lightly carriest thy triumph,  
Winged Grace.  
Over the ponderous unmeaningness  
of arrogant bulk."

Works of art need not always have profound significance to be enjoyed, and "Pictures for the Grown-up Child" at the Nicholson Gallery were collected with the open object of giving simple pleasure, like toys to the infant.

15 December, 1938

## **GREAT BRITAIN AND THE EAST**

p643(W)

### **Section: NOTES OF THE WEEK**

#### **Lord Zetland and Tagore**

Happily invoking his own personal memories of Santiniketan, where Tagore's famous ashram has grown into a flourishing university, Lord Zetland delighted his audience at the opening of the Exhibition of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's drawings at the Calmann Gallery with his appreciation of the great poet's versatility. From a casual blot in one of his manuscripts, Tagore devised what eventually became a drawing - an adventure on which many an author as well as the idle clerk may embark. That accident, however, seems to have given Tagore an inspiration, so with an extraordinary subordination of his genius to a new medium he started his career as an artist. The variety of the drawings in this Exhibition bears testimony to the poet-artist's skill.

After this, it is not surprising to learn that Sir Edwin Lutyens is thinking of painting a picture for the Academy, or to hear that may. George Robey handed to his friends at the complimentary dinner given to him the other evening an inimitable caricature of himself by his own hand.

15 December, 1938

## **MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p20c2(D)

### **Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR DR. TAGORE AND THE CZECHS**

#### **A Betrayed Democracy To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian**

Sir, - I have just received from India a letter which Dr. Rabindranath Tagore wrote to a friend in Czechoslovakia. It runs as follows:

I feel as keenly about the suffering of your people as if I was one of them. For what has happened in your country is not a mere local misfortune which may at the best claim our sympathy. It is a tragic revelation that the destiny of all those principles of humanity for which the peoples of the West turned martyrs for three centuries rests in the hands of cowardly guardians who are selling it to save their own skins. It turns one cynical to see the democratic peoples betraying their kind when even the bullies stand by each other.

I feel so humiliated and so helpless when I contemplate all this - humiliated to see all the values which have given whatever worth modern civilisation has betrayed one by one, and helpless that we are powerless to prevent it. Our country is itself a victim of these wrongs. My words have no power to stay the onslaught of the maniacs, or even the power to arrest the desertion of those who erstwhile pretended to be the saviours of humanity I can only remind those who are not wholly demented that when men turn beasts they sooner or later tear each other.

As for your own country, I can only hope that, though abandoned and robbed it will maintain its native integrity and, falling back upon its own inalienable resources, will re-create a richer national life than before.

Tagore has been described by Mahatma Gandhi as "the keeper of India's conscience." I am sure your readers will agree with him.-Yours, &c.,

**D.V. TAHMANKAR**, Joint

Editor India Bulletin

"Friends of India."

30 Fleet Street, London,

E.C. 4, December 13.

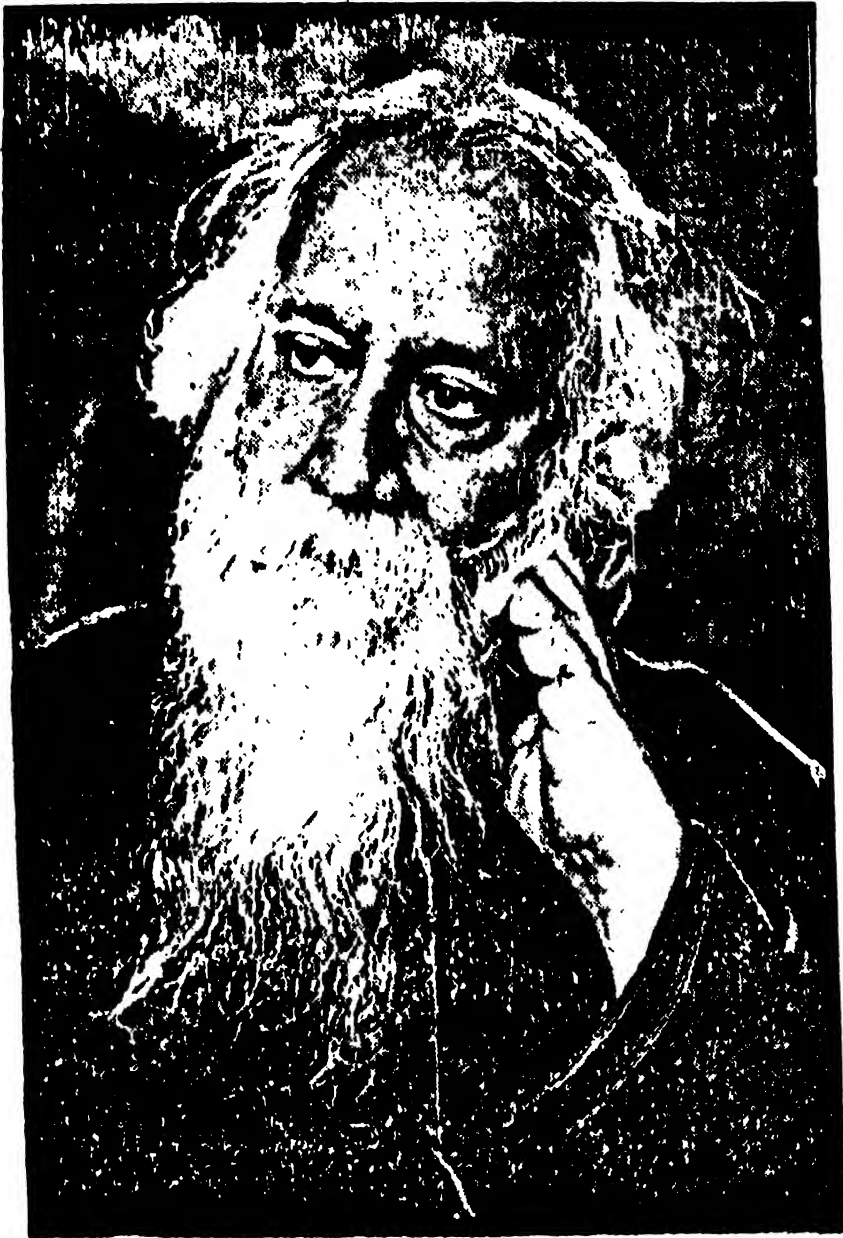
15 December, 1938

## **MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**

p10c5(D)

### **Section: OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT Paintings by Rabindranath Tagore**

When a poet paints one expects his images to be clear and meticulous, like Blake's or Michelangelo's, but Rabindranath Tagore's at the Calmann Gallery



***The Head of a Poet.*—Rabindranath Tagore, a distinguished Indian poet, who has condemned, in his writings, the Japanese attack on China.**

in St. James's place are the exact reverse. It is said that he found his first impetus to painting in an accidental blot on one of his manuscripts, to which he endeavoured to "give a decent burial" by turning it idly into a shape with a meaning. All his drawings, delightfully varied as they are in colour and texture, are glorified blots to which he has given a meaning by lovingly elaborating them. One might almost call his work the apotheosis of the doodle. Animals, birds, flowers, and human beings are dimly apparent as a basis to these drawings, but only as a basis.

Primarily he is not an illustrator but a shape-maker who half-closes his eyes and lets his brush have its own way. Sometimes the drawings are as angular and geometrical as a pattern on a Mexican pot, sometimes as flowing as a Celtic illumination, sometimes as soft and atmospheric as a water-colour by Turner.

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17 December, 1938

**CAVALCADE**

p15(W)

**Poet-Painter**

EIGHTY-YEAR-OLD Bengali poet, Noble prize-winner Rabindranath Tagore began to paint about twelve years ago, fascinated by strange shapes he elaborates from corrections on his manuscripts.

Now there is a full show of his work at the Calmann Gallery, 42, At. James's Place, S.W.1., under the patronage of the Marquess of Zetland.

Poet Tagore paints with a pen, seldom with a brush, drawing with coloured inks in lines and blots. Scorning all rules of art, he works directly through his imagination, achieves rich, primitive, fantastic effects.

General principles of his art are derived from the tropical country of Bengal, where people sing his songs in the fields, practise his teachings in philosophy and agriculture. There, clad in an orange robe, Tagore relaxes, paints on hand-made Indian papers in the cool of the evening, after his work at the University of Santiniketan.

Strange faces, flowers, birds, and beasts form themselves on his paper, suggest an inner life remote from the realities of the world.

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18 December, 1938

**THE OBSERVER**

p10c5(S)

**Section: ART AND ARTISTS**

**TAGORE**

I have only a line in which to call attention to the unexpected exhibition of paintings by Sir Rabindranath Tagore at the Calmann Gallery. In a man of such proved high imagination in poetry the only question is how successfully is his brush a true relection of his thoughts? Here are unusual images, conveyed with great zest for movement, little hint of obvious amateurism, and, indeed, a quite unusual use of lighting as expression. Such examples as "Birds," "Heads," "Flowers" (20 and 28), "Six Women" or "Monster," stimulate a real desire to see further developments of Sir Rabindranath's plastic fancy.

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18 December, 1938

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

p5c5(S)

**Section: THE GALLERIES**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

If Adrian Hill's water-colours are the result of dexterity and calculation, Rabindranath Tagore's, at the Calmann Gallery in St. James's Place, are the exact opposite. It is astonishing how much he has achieved with hardly any dexterity and no calculation at all. If, as is reported, the famous poet began to draw because he had made an accidental blot on his manuscript and then casually coaxed and wheedled and elaborated the same blot into shape, he has used the same method in a more elaborate form ever since. The result is a medley of subjects, of methods, of textures, in which everything depends on the quality of the whimsy that lies behind them. And whether any given drawing has "come off" or not from the point of view of design, there is a lovable, playful flavour in them all.

Next week's article will deal with some of the mixed exhibitions of prints and smaller works designed to attract the Christmas shopper.

*19 December, 1938*

# THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

p16c3 D

## Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DR. TAGORE AND THE CZECHS

#### To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian

Sir We who were familiar with Mr. Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence and passive resistance are surprised to see, described as an expression of India's conscience, Dr. Tagore's regret that we did not fight, or at least brandish our swords at Munich. But in the hope that Czechoslovakia in native integrity (not shattered by war, and free from its communal embarrassments) will recreate a richer national life than before. British pacifists are in happy agreement with the militarists of Bengal. - Yours, &c.,

GILBERT JACKSON

7, Gainsborough Gardens, Well Walk, Hampstead,  
London N.W.3, December 15

*20 December, 1938*

# THE DAILY TELEGRAPH AND MORNING POST

p17c4 D

## POET'S PAINTING ON SHOW TAGORE'S GREATER ART REFLECTED WORKS WITH DREAM QUALITIES

By T. W. EARP

The exhibition of paintings by the Indian poet, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, at the Calmann Gallery, St. James's-place, S.W., though it will not give him equal fame in a second art, makes an interesting complement to the famous "Gitanjali."

Without being illustration, many of the pictures suggest the spirit of the book. Their broad decorative effect and glow of colour, as with "Mother and Child," or the dark trees and stream of "Landscape," partake of a kindred luxurious imagery.

They evoke emotion, yet avoid defining it. The line of "Head" or "Bird and Bulk" is sinuous and precise, the whole design keeps a balance of pattern, but the impression that results, while richly sensuous, is vague.

## WATER-COLOUR LANDSCAPES

It may be that the evasion of what is clear and descriptive is deliberate, for the gleaming birds and flowers are half-way between the actual and the fanciful. Whether evolved consciously or not, they are ultimately the creations of a dream, and it is in this dream-like quality that their attraction consists.

After them there is something astringent, a sharp recall to the tangible, in Adrian Hill's water-colour landscapes at the Brook-street Galleries. Their luminous tones and powerful drawing, with "Morland Farm" or "Busy Thames," drive straight towards essential form and the feeling of open air.

Moving water in "The Ebb Tide," the wide stretch of space in "On the Sands," or the living green of "Cotswold Village," each typifies a varied treatment of nature, whose vigour does not exclude sensitive perception.

1939

5 January, 1939

**GREAT BRITAIN AND THE EAST**

p18(W)

**INDIA FROM LONDON**

*"The style for some future school."*

**Tagore's genius with the Brush**

**VIGOROUS PERSONALITY FINDS  
NEW EXPRESSION**

A second visit to the exhibition of paintings by Sir Rabindranath Tagore at the Calmann gallery (the show ends on January 6) confirms the first impression of the poets's striking versatility. Picture-lovers, when it comes to the delicate question of backing their opinions by purchase, are kittle cattle. Tagore does not make their task easy for them. He defies convention and, unless very sure of the ground, the amateur is disinclined to take risks. So often even moderate prices fail to break down coyness.

There is no doubt that in bringing his poetic genius to bear upon the canvas Tagore achieves some startling effects. He seems to revel in a depth of colouring which is independent of contrasts. From the lore of Hindu mythology he finds inspiration in more than presentation of the grotesque. His sense of colour is sound, as will be seen when in a flower study he condescends to be almost conventional.

In catching the beauty of curves he is unerring. His portrait of an Indian Girl is reticent in its mysticism and conveys the glamour of a yearning dignity with an accuracy of his own. He interprets the soul of his people and is content to allow the physical aspects of their existence escape as if by accident from the cloud of colour splashed on the canvas. He is curiously virile in the manipulation of angles, and it may well be that some of his technique will set the style for some future school. Only the East could have produced his art. But the West will assuredly find in it much instruction and stimulus to progress.

20 January, 1939

**THE BIRMINGHAM POST**

p15c3-4(D)

**Section: WOMEN'S INTERESTS**

**The Dances of India**

A lecture given last evening under the auspices of the India Society, in the Assembly Hall of the royal Empire Society, threw light upon origin and significance of the dance forms of India. The lecture was given in part by Mr. Guido Carreras and in part by his wife, the American dancer who is professionally known as "La Meri" and has made a study of dances of the East. In Indian legend dancing is given a divine origin, for Siva danced at the creation of the world, and the rules or scriptures of the "Natyā" were framed by Brahma to be a means whereby mortals might attain expression through movement. The task of committing these rules to writing was entrusted to the savant, Bharata, who in a monumental work has covered every detail from the measurements of the stage to the actor-dancer's last, off-stage prayer for inspiration. Nothing is left to chance of the improvisation of the artist. "When the curtain rises it is too late to begin the making of a new work of art."

**Limitless Hand-poses**

Perhaps the most characteristic element in the technique of Hindu dancing is the "narta hasta," or hand-pose. Of the single hand-pose there were originally thirty-three variations. Now there are five hundred, and double hand-poses are limitless. Each movement of the hands must be, in the first place, true to nature, and in the second place beautiful. One graceful movement of La Meri's hands, imitating rhythmic flapping of an elephant's ears, conveyed a whole vision of the East, another made one shiver before a cobra poised to strike, and with a third one seemed to hear the wings of an eagle and to follow its paths in the sky. A dance of the New School founded a few years ago by Rabindranath Tagore, tells the story of a young girl tending the flowers in her garden, who is frightened by a bee, catch a bird and sorrowfully goes away with its feathers after it has escaped her. The

garden symbolises youth; the bee youth's little griefs; and the bird its passion joys. In her interpretation of this allegory, La Meri wore an exquisite Indian dress of pale mauve and silver, with silver bracelets and ear-rings and silver bells on her feet.

7 February, 1939

**EAST ANGLICAN DAILY TIMES**

p5c3-4(D)

## **TWO-MINUTE TALKS**

### **A DAILY TONIC FOR MIND AND SPIRIT**

#### **OLD INTO NEW**

All of us at this hour are reaching out towards the future, in some mystical way to possess it. That is our destiny, too tremendous for us to understand, but not in any way to be denied and far less to be escaped. The same thought has been expressed by philosophers as far removed from one another as the German Nietzsche and the Indian Tagore. "What is great in man," wrote Nietzsche, "is that he is a bridge and not a goal" Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian, put it in these words: "Man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself. He is aware that he is not imperfect, but incomplete." And man's quest for completion carries him into the future, away into the regions which lie beyond his own individual death.

We need mysticism if we are ever to catch even a brief glimpse into the meaning of our lives, for there is a mystical unity between past, present and future, and we belong to it. Nothing could be more short-sighted or "earth-bound" than to suppose that life began for us on the day of our birth. Our being has been immanent in the creation from the beginning. We are truly the heirs to all the ages. And in so far as the present is ceaselessly a "becoming," a transformation of old into new, it follows that we who work in the present participate directly in the work of the future. We have our share in life, throughout the ages that have been and are yet to be.

That thought is a tremendous one to entertain, but those who do make up their minds to understand its meaning will never again talk about the

"littleness of life" or cast shallow doubts on immortality. Nobody supposes that the miraculous human physique lacks purpose, because that purpose is plain for all to see. Why, then, should we suppose that the still more wonderful mind and spirit of man are some kind of accident, merely because they appear in the present to lack adequate fulfilment.

Man is a bridge, as Nietzsche said, leading to a future of which he must necessarily be a part, and in which, to change to the metaphor of Tagore, he is assured of progressive fulfilments until completion comes at last. Our past has been stupendous, but our future is too full of splendour for us to understand.

**ROBERT POWER.**

11 February, 1939

**THE INQUIRER**

p63(W)

### **C.F. ANDREWS: CHRISTIAN UNIVERSALIST**

**By J. Vijaya-Tunga**

**(No Englishman is more widely known and respected in the East than Mr. Charles Freer Andrews who celebrates his 68th birthday on February 12. We print below an appreciation by Mr. J. Vijaya-Tunga (who has now returned to Ceylon) and a review of Mr. Andrews' latest book by Sir Francis Younghusband, who has likewise earned the respect of the Indian peoples whom he knows so well.)**

Mr. C. F. ANDREWS' humanitarian services are well known, and his place in thousands of hearts is assured. But because the spirit he typifies is rare it is fitting that occasionally we attempt to give some articulation to the admiration he has evoked.

So perfectly does he fill his self-assigned role of servant of mankind that sometimes, I fear, we take him too much for granted. He is, in my opinion, guilty of one sin, that of encouraging our selfishness. He is so much at others' behests and needs. His lack of leisure has been increasing to such an extent that at the age of sixty-one he had no more

time to write his abbreviated autobiography, *What I Owe to Christ*, than what was snatched on urgent voyages and journeys over half the globe. His literary talent, which in those early and comparatively leisured days in India essayed both poetry and prose of a high standard, is limited to-day to writing about others, mostly on their behalf. Of his own personal responsibilities and afflictions the world has no knowledge. Granted that his spiritual strength is increased thereby, but even a saint must be compelled to give some thought to himself.

He is one of those very few Occidentals who can affirm without having to deny, a characteristic so typical of Orientals and so baffling to the Occidental. His acceptance of Tagore and Gandhi, in the same breath as it were, is a gesture full of significance. Through and in him Tagore and Gandhi have been able to supplement their respective viewpoints, so opposite at first sight. Both Tagore and Gandhi are humanitarians. The one thinks of relieving the immediate distress of to-day. The other is concerned about the likelihood of distress to-morrow. But there is no doubt about their humanitarianism. Thus it is that Andrews who is too much the practical Samaritan to con over the passage of seasons, participates in the idealism of each. Of Mr. Gandhi he writes:

"There is a ruler of India, Mahatma Gandhi - whose sway is greater than all imperial power. There is a spiritual palace which Mahatma Gandhi had built up out of an eternal fabric. Its foundations are deeply and truly laid in the kingdom of God. No oppression of the poor has gone to build it. Love and devotion and service to the poor are its golden decorations."

Of Tagore he writes:

"The crowning success of Rabindranath Tagore has already brought East and West closer together in a common fellowship and understanding. Where the forces of racial rivalry and religious division are so strong, it is indeed no small blessing to humanity when a generous voice can be clearly heard, above the discordant tumult of the time ..."

And Tagore and Gandhi each in turn sees a materialisation of their respective idealism in Andrews. Gandhi says:

"Andrews is if possible more than a blood brother. I do not think I can claim a deeper attachment to anyone than to Mr. Andrews. Everyday we have been coming closer to each other and we look forward to a day when out of our friendship will grow the same close friendship between the Englishman and the Indian. Whether we shall succeed or not only God knows, but we do know that the twenty-four hours of our lives are a conscious effort towards that goal. We are sick of the feuds raging between man and man and it is our ambition to wean mankind from brute force and convert it to the use of soul-force."

Tagore becomes lyrical about Andrews thus.

"When with the finger touch of dawn on the harp  
strings of light broke forth the call  
from the deep of immensity,  
My heart left its nest and went on  
its search for a goal,  
whose path it did not know,  
'Wake' the call sounded, 'and seek you  
dwelling across  
the sea into whose bosom all the life streams  
from all quarters of the earth ..."

As Gandhi says:

"No one knows the history of Andrews's many unseen services. Those the public see are by no means the most significant or fruitful. Who knows for instance, how he influenced the many beneficial decisions of Lord Hardinge ...?"

I like to believe that Andrews was conscious of the humour of it when he wrote under "recreation" in the *Who's Who* entry "Travel." The Indian Railway time-table is notoriously complicated and I have heard it said jokingly more than once regarding some knotty travel problem "Ask Andrews!"

A personal reminiscence will best illustrate the less humorous and the less conspicuous side of his labours. Mr. Andrews and I once happened to occupy rooms in the same building at Santiniketan. During the summer there sleeping out of doors is more pleasant and I used to sleep in the verandah. On this particular occasion Mr. Andrews had to leave for Calcutta at short notice - it was in connection

with a famine or a flood in Orissa or some similar public distress. He had to catch his train about 2 a.m. and the railway station was about two miles away. There was a bit of moon but it was a very dusty and lonely stretch of road. I was aware that he had to take this train and I was aware too that he hadn't troubled anybody for company or to procure a conveyance. I wasn't asleep when, shortly after midnight, I noticed him starting out most casually with a "hurricane" lantern in one hand, papers and an attache case in the other, and a pillow under one arm. He was dressed as he always is in India, in the plainest Indian fashion - *dhoty* and shirt. Of course I ought to have volunteered to accompany him but the languor of the Indian night (actually my laziness) and the prospect of the lonely walk back encouraged my uneasy conscience, which has remained guilty on this point to this day. But when his friends met him the following morning bustling with plans would they have had the slightest hint as to his own discomforts? Of course not.

It is so with all his activities, and Gandhi's reference to Andrews's many unseen services was the mildest hint. With perhaps less humour but more truth, Christ's faithful apostle, as he is termed by his admirers, might have entered as "recreation" in *Who's Who*, "Going about my Father's business."

24 February, 1939

### THE BIRMINGHAM POST

p9c6,D

### TRIBUTES TO THE LATE LORD BRABOURNE

#### SIR ROBERT REID TO ACT AS GOVERNOR OF BENGAL

Lord Brabourne, Governor of Bengal and former Governor of Bombay, died at Calcutta yesterday, after an operation a few days ago at the age of forty-three. The King has approved the appointment of Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam, to act as Governor of Bengal, and of Mr. Henry Joseph Twynani, Indian Civil Service, to act as Governor of Assam in the absence of Sir Robert Reid.

The news of Lord Brabourne's death has been received with widespread regret in India (Reuter reports). The Mahatma Gandhi, interviewed at Wardha, said; "The news of Lord Brabourne's death grieves me deeply. I had the privilege of close friendship with him."

The Prime Minister of Bengal (Mr. B. G. Kher) said "Lord Brabourne was a very great man, and a great friend to us. We inaugurated the new Constitution with his assistance and he was very helpful to us."

Sir Rabindranath Tagore said: "I felt deeply drawn by Lord Brabourne's personality and sense of justice. I mourn the passing of a true gentleman and a noble representative of the English people."

16 March, 1939

### THE NOTTINGHAM GUARDIAN

p4c1-2(D)

#### New Publications

Dr. W. Lesny, author of "Rabindranath Tagore: His Personality and Work," which Messrs. Allen and Unwin will publish on March 21st, is a Sanskrit scholar who lived with the poet for some time and has closely studied his writings. This background of personal knowledge enables the author to write authoritatively about Tagore and his book is enriched with quotations from the poet's own works.

17 March, 1939

### JOHN O'LONDONS WEEKLY

p945(V)

#### Section: QUESTION AND ANSWER

A quotation from Tagore. - can you tell me where to find the following quotation:-

*... that I may never lose the touch of the one in the play of the many.*

- M.P., Toronto.

*It is from Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali: When one*

*knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut.  
Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the touch of  
the one in the play of the many.*

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18 March, 1939

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p160(W)

**Section: NEXT WEEK**

Mr. C. F. Andrews has written a foreword to a study of "Rabindranath Tagore: His personality and Work," by Dr. V. Lesny, a Sanskrit scholar who has had unusual opportunities to enter into the thoughts of the poet. The book is coming from Allen and Unwin on Tuesday. Date of publication is 22nd March, 1939.

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15 April, 1939

**THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

p218(W)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

**A NEW STUDY**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE, HIS PERSONALITY AND WORK. By PROFESSOR V. LESNY. Allen and Unwin. 8s. 6d.**

The author of this book is a Czech, a Sanskrit scholar who left Prague to study for a time at Tagore's own school in Bengal, where he quickly mastered the Bengali language and also enjoyed the intimacy of the poet himself. As an appreciator, therefore, of his many-sided work and personality he has unusual qualifications, among which the knowledge of Bengali is perhaps the most important. For, as Mr. Andrews reminds us in his foreword, up to the age of fifty Tagore hardly ever wrote in English, and most of what he has composed in Bengali still remains untranslated.

He has said himself that "only by following the stream of one's mother tongue can one get to the sea of human culture," and although he has both composed in and translated some of his work into English it remains a foreign language to him, despite his exceptional command of its idiom and rhythm. Dr. Lesny, indeed, tells us that, while in his translations Tagore creates something new, they are often mere poetical paraphrases of the original, lacking its strict discipline, its wealth of metrical forms, melodiousness and swinging rhyme. This is all rather tantalizing for an English reader whose appreciation of Tagore's verse is likely to be tempered by a feeling that it too often lacks creative tension and that the vision and mellifluous tenderness of spirit implicit in it have an insufficiently organic form. Dr. Lesny, however, is not concerned with such questions or, indeed, with criticism of any kind. His book is a full appreciative survey of all that Tagore has done as poet, dramatist, novelist, essayist, educationist, nationalist, "apostle of enlightened humanity and ardent prophet of the world unity."

**AN ADMIRING CHRONICLER**

With so many branches of achievement to consider it is hardly surprising that Dr. Lesny is content to be the admiring chronicler. But too often his admiration lacks significance, as, for example, when he writes that Tagore's "message is clothed in expressions which have the charm of the unusual, and in the flowering garden of his religious poetry the connoisseur will find rare blooms of noble devotion." The same gracious vagueness characterizes his remark that the poet has written "a great transformation of the meaning of life not through mysticism, but naturally, by communion with the divine essence." For what is mysticism but communion with this essence? Translation into English may in some degree have dulled the edge of his meaning, but the discursiveness is inherent in his method and is not redeemed by the patient industry with which he summarizes the plots of Tagore's novels and plays or even devotes two pages to reproducing the rules which he tried to establish for the pronunciation of the vowel "a" in a reformed Bengali. Some, indeed, of his summaries, particularly of the plays, are valuable as showing the parables

implicit in them. But too often they are superfluous to those who have read the originals and unenlightening to those who have not.

Dr. Lesny's study is, however, both able and welcome as a careful and sympathetic record of Tagore's life and works. And he brings out well that what has distinguished his subject from so many of his fellow-countrymen has been consistent rejection of a philosophy which would dismiss the actual world of form and human relationships as an illusion, and his genius for living in it, both as artist and man, fully, joyously and devotedly. He may have surrendered to the call of life too easily with a consequent loss of spiritual intensity. But eagerly as he has "drunk of the overflowing cup of life's pleasure," he has been equally sensitive to the need of being liberated from suffering by suffering. It is interesting to remember, too, that before Gandhi he had begun to work for the renovation of the Indian village, and his exhortations to constructive activity have been backed by his own example. The mutual understanding between East and West for which he has always worked may not be as near as he believes and may cost a greater travail of spirit than he has conceived. But the grace and wisdom which he has expressed through a long life provide a foretaste of a harmony much to be desired.

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2 June, 1939

### THE CHURCH TIMES

p584-585(W)

### EAST AND WEST

**INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN CULTURE.** By Paul Brunton. (Rider. 3s. 6d.)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.** By Professor V. Lesny. Translated by Guy McKeever Phillips.

Foreword by C. F. Andrews. (George Allen and Unwin. 8s. 6d.)

[Only the relevant part is incorporated here]

Of those who have struggled for a closer understanding between East and West in cultural mat-

ters, Professor Lesny sees in Rabindranath Tagore the one to whom the greatest merit attaches. This renowned Indian poet and author has undoubtedly interpreted for the West the more serious reflections of the people of Bengal, and in both civilizations his literary genius has been duly recognized. But since his most important works have been written in Bengali and have not been translated into English, the recent volume will give English readers some conception of their nature and contents. Dr. Lesny, himself a Czech, in addition to being a Sanskrit scholar has a very competent knowledge of Bengali. Moreover, he has lived in intimate contact with the poet and his associates at Satiniketan in Bengal, where Tagore established his Indian school on the pattern of an Indian *ashram*. Thus he has been able not only to gain a first-hand acquaintance with the literature, but also to enter into the thoughts of one of the most remarkable personalities of the East.

After a brief survey of the intellectual and literary tendencies before the time of Tagore, his youth and the beginnings of his career are described. The youngest son of Maharshi Debendranath and grandson of Prince Dwarkanath, he was sent to England in 1877 to study law, but soon returned to India and began writing for Bengali periodicals. At the age of twenty-five he was a leading figure in Calcutta literary society. Then follows an account of his devotion to public works. He disbelieved in violent methods, and sought a social rather than a political revolution. Mankind needed to be humanized, and this could not be achieved by bloodshed. His journey to the West in 1912-13 brought him world-wide fame. He was awarded the Nobel prize for literature, and in 1915 he received a knighthood, which he resigned three years later as a protest against repressions in the Punjab. In 1920 he left India, embittered by the course of events, and a period of restlessness ensued, the volume concluding with a consideration of the "Autumn of his life." Thus is brought to a close a penetrating study of the manifold aspects of a revealer of new paths and a teacher of men who has left a rich and undying heritage to future generations in East and West alike.

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9 June, 1939

**THE FRIEND**

p504(W)

**India's Poet**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE. HIS PERSONALITY AND WORK.** W. Lesny, translated by Guy McKeever Phillips. Allen and Unwin. 8s. 6d.

DR. LESNY is a Sanscrit scholar from Prague who spent a good deal of time after the war at Santiniketan. C. F. Andrews tells us in a Foreword that more than 80 per cent. of Bengali words are of Sanscrit origin, so that it is not astonishing that Dr. Lesny rapidly learnt Bengali, and was able to earn the commendation of Tagore for the way "in which in a short time you have entered into the spirit of the Bengali language and my writings." It is perhaps in part because of this grasp of the Bengali background that the author is clearly the person to present us with an excellent study of the personality and work of the great Bengali poet.

Rabindranath Tagore was the youngest of the seven sons of Debendranath Tagore and was born in Calcutta on May 6, 1861. After a somewhat lonely childhood, in spite of wealthy surroundings, he went with his father at the age of twelve for a long stay in the Himalayas. On the journey thither they stayed for a while at Santiniketan, where in a lonely spot the father had planted a garden and erected a house and sanctuary. Here the boy spent the first really happy days of his youth, in the place destined to be the centre of his work at a later stage.

The author follows out his story through the poet's youth and maturity, his literary work, his subsequent fame and world-wide recognition and his wanderings in many countries. We learn also of the relations with Mahatma Gandhi, not always in agreement; and of others with the British, including the famous protest at the infamy of Amritsar. And so down to the present time, when Dr. Tagore is fast approaching the age of 80.

There is much also with respect to his poetry, Bengali and English, and the teachings of his message to the world, all told with sympathy and understanding. This is a book for all lovers of Tagore.

**CARL HEATH.**

9 June, 1939

**THE MANSFIELD REPORTER AND SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD TIMES**

p4c5(W)

**BOOKSHELF****By Rev. Harold Goodrich**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE. HIS LIFE AND WORK.** - Allen and Unwin, 8s. 6d.

No man has done more than Rabindranath Tagore to interpret the spirit and traditions of India to the western world and yet most of his work was written without a thought of the West.

A great deal of it was never translated. Nevertheless, such poems, essays, and philosophy as have been translated, together with the few books and poems that Tagore wrote in English, have done more than reveal the spirit of India. They have placed Tagore in the ranks of those poets who belong to the world.

As is to be expected the works of the great Indian poet are full of mysticism, allegory, parable and legend. The reader of his works is introduced to a wealth of picturesque legend and folklore that has come down from the far-off days of Indian history. The themes of Tagore's poetry are, however, eternal themes, the stuff of all great literature. Birth and childhood, love and life, natural beauty, hates and affection, moral issues, religion, death and eternity.

Tagore in relation to his pupils reminds one forcibly of Socrates though his teaching method was not the same. He taught a lofty view of human life and destiny, and made it the aim of his life to proclaim the underlying unity of all mankind. His own philosophy led him logically to the desire to reconcile the claims of East and West. He gave his friendship readily to all sympathetic spirits among the English, notably to Mr. C. F. Andrews who contributes a foreword to this book. Professor Lesny, the author, enjoyed the intimate friendship of Tagore.

The poet has visited England on several occasions, living and attending school at Brighton as a boy, and afterwards studying law in England. Prof. Lesny seeks in this book rather to perform the office

of interpreter than to write a conventional biography. His work will serve to bring many readers to the poems and essays of a noble mind which was habitually engaged with lofty themes and exhibited unusual poise and harmony.

9 June, 1939

# **PUBLIC OPINION**

p541(W)

## **"MAN IS MAN, MACHINE IS MACHINE, AND NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET."**

### **A STUDY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE BY A CZECH PROFESSOR OF PRAGUE UNIVERSITY**

*Professor V. Lesny, of Prague, is a close personal friend of Rabindranath Tagore and has been his guest for weeks at a time on more than one occasion. He is an expert authority on Bengali writings and is well qualified to write on Tagore's work and influence. The result of his work is given in "Rabindranath Tagore" (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.)*

THERE is one interesting fact which is made clear, and that is that Rabindranath Tagore did not attempt to write in English until he was fifty and that very little of the work of his early years has been translated into English. Professor Lesny has made a special study of these early writings, and in this biography of the great poet is therefore able to introduce to the reader much that is new of Tagore's poetry and prose. He gives, for example the lines written by the poet just after the death of his wife:

"When she still lived, then every  
gift  
She gave me. Lord, I could repay  
That time will never come again.  
Her night is morning now  
You took her in Your arms O  
Lord,  
And at your feet to-day I lay the  
gifts  
That I prepared for her erstwhile.  
For every wrong to her,

For every fault of mine  
I must beg pardon of You, Lord,  
to-day.  
The blooms of gratitude and love  
Which she no longer can receive  
I bring to you to-day, O Lord,  
Though they were meant for  
her."

One of the best known of Tagore's books in English is *Gitanjali*, and the writer gives the poet's own translation of his lines on the Creator and the purpose of man's toil.

"That is my prayer to Thee, my  
Lord - strike, strike at the  
roots of penury in my heart  
Give me the strength lightly to  
bear my joys and sorrows  
Give me the strength to make  
my love fruitful in service  
Give me the strength never to  
disown the poor or bend my  
knees before insolent might  
Give me the strength to raise my  
mind high above daily trifles  
And give me the strength to sur-  
render my strength to Thy  
will with love "

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard  
ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones  
He is with them in sun and in shower, and His gar-  
ment covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and  
even like Him come down on the dusty soil

"Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be  
found? Our Master Himself has joyfully taken upon  
Him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all  
for ever.

"Come out of thy meditations and leave aside  
thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy  
clothes become tattered and stained? Meet Him and  
stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow"

"In the poet's eyes ... the real East is still undis-  
covered," says professor Lesny, "for the West does  
not understand it; Western travellers come to the  
Orient full of egoism, full of political and economic  
cannibalism. To-day, after the Great War, the East

asks, full of astonishment, whether the celebrated grandeur of the West is really great.

"Kipling's well-known words that East and West shall never meet are only correct in so far as no signs of true contact have yet been manifested, and the reason is that the West sent the East not its humanity, but machines. Kipling's words should therefore read: '*Man is man, machine is machine, and never the twain shall meet.*' Tagore praises the old times when man's spiritual attributes were appreciated and cultivated; he condemns the race for wealth, condemns the organised selfishness of individuals and communities, condemns hedonism and the oppression of individuality in the present day.

"He urges his countrymen to ask themselves whether they long for true liberty or only for eternal comfort, whether they are willing to train the minds of their children to the ideal of human dignity, which will not suffer unjust restriction. Genuine freedom, he says, must come from within and is no matter of externals.

"Tagore's opinion of the 'nation' is well known from his *Nationalism*. The nations, he says, are the mere organisation of power; there is a difference, therefore, between the living spirit of a people and the methods of an organised nation. He firmly believes that this age of nationalism is merely a period of transition, that the days of collective selfishness are numbered and that the time is coming when there will be communion governed by a spirit of truth and by a sincere desire for harmonious collaboration.

"Being favoured of international collaboration, he warmly approves of the idea of the League of Nations. He sees with pleasure that the awakening of Asia is in progress. As modern methods of communication have brought the East nearer to the West a place must be found in Asia for contact between the civilisations of the East and those of the West - for its own sake and for that of the rest of the world the East must make its influence felt.

"In such a place there must be no opposing interests; there learned men of all countries and continents must reveal concealed secrets, thinkers must solve the problems of life, artists create objects of beauty and holy men sanctify their life by truth and be a light to others - not for the benefit of a single country, but for that of the whole world."

Professor Lesny records the following interesting chat with Einstein:

"Tagore said that man is the foundation of everything, that without the human mind there would be nothing, neither beauty nor truth. Einstein agreed, as far as beauty was concerned, but not with regard to truth. Although the existence of truth independent of man cannot be proved, he said, he believes in it nevertheless. That, he said, is his religion. Tagore objected that even if it existed its existence would have no significance if there were no men in the world. 'Then I am more religious than you are,' Einstein replied."

This book by a professor of Czechoslovakia is a reminder of the fine scholarship that animated so many of the brilliant staff at Prague University. Certainly Professor Lesny has given an interpretation of Tagore which surpasses in interest and judgment most works on the same subject by other writers of the West, and this fact ought to be willingly acknowledged and appreciated.

24 August, 1939

#### THE LISTENER

p396(W)

#### Rabindranath Tagore.

By Prof. V. Lesny Allen and Unwin. 8s. 6d.

Rabindranath Tagore is the most famous of living poets; his renown is worldwide. Yet this fame rests on those portions only of his work which have been translated into English or other European languages (usually from the English); and these portions are a mere fraction of the whole, for in copiousness and facility Tagore rivals and surpasses Victor Hugo. Moreover, the rhythmic prose into which his lyrics have been translated, by himself or others, gives no idea of the melodiously rippling movement of the original Bengali: especially when one has heard the poet chant his lyrics himself, the discrepancy is surprising. All the more remarkable is the profound impression his poetry has made on the peoples of so many countries.

Mr. Edward Thompson's admirable study of Tagore's poetry and drama, published in 1926, was

the work of one who knows India and the Bengali language: it was enthusiastic but discriminating. But since 1925 Tagore has reminded continuously active and productive, and Dr. Lesny's work carries the story of his life down to the present day. Dr. Lesny is a Bengali scholar, with an intimate knowledge of Sanskrit; he has lived in close companionship with Tagore and his friends and disciples at Santiniketan, the famous open-air school founded by the poet in 1901. He is a Czech; and this volume, written in Czech, has been translated by Mr. McKeever Phillips. (It is interesting, by the way, to hear that Tagore's poems were favourite reading for Czech soldiers during the great War.) Dr. Lesny's story is designed to give a portrait of the whole man in his many-sided activities, together with a record of his work. All through his career, even from his youth, there is a growing preoccupation with the idea of a civilisation based on a synthesis of East and West. Dr. Lesny sees him as the great

prophet of this idea. For a few years, early in the present century, Tagore was a leader of nationalists, but acts of violence disgusted him and drove him from politics. He never flattered the vanity of his countrymen, and had no belief either in a nationalism which would shut India away from the rest of the world or in a blind imitation of Western culture. He has done much for the peasants and for education, insisting that teaching should be in the mother-tongue, yet advocating as necessary the study of Western literature. In these latter years Tagore, driven by an inner restlessness, has made journey after journey to almost every country in East and West; his lectures and speeches, with his noble presence, have carried the genius of India on a pilgrimage through the world. In this time of convulsions, of fears and doubts, it is good to listen to this sane voice, with its profound faith in life and humanity.

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1940

23 February, 1940

THE TIMES

p4c5(D)

## THE POET OF INDIA

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S GENIUS

By EDWARD THOMPSON

Rabindranath Tagore (on whom, it is announced, Oxford University proposes to confer an honorary D. Litt.) was born in Calcutta on May 6, 1861. In the Tagores, from generation to generation, the national life was at its fullest and freest. The poet's grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore, was one of the first Indians to visit England, and it was by his encouragement that after Rammohan Roy's death, in 1833, the famous theistic society that he founded, the Brahmo Samaj, was kept alive. Rabindranath's father, Debendranath, established the Samaj firmly; his sanctity and wisdom were universally recognized - he was the Maharshi ("Great Rishi"). His autobiography, of which part has been translated into English, is marked both by detachment from the world and ability to assess it. Rabindranath's eldest brother, who like the Maharshi lived to extreme old age, began as a poet and passed over to philosophy; another brother was the first Indian to enter the I.C.S.; a sister was the first Indian woman novelist.

But the chief influence, of all his remarkable family, of Rabindranath's childhood was his brother Jyotirindranath, of whose pencilled heads Sir William Rothenstein has written: "I know few modern portrait drawings that show greater beauty and insight." His interests were wide; he launched simultaneously a monthly magazine, *Bharati*, to which for 15 years Rabindranath was the chief contributor, and an Indian-owned line of river streamers. His generous and eager mind was matched by that of his wife - a brilliant horse woman, who in the seventies as she made her spirited way along the Chitpur road beside her husband to the *maiden*, was a distress to the orthodox, and troubled even the Maharshi. It is 55 years since she died, but the memory of her kind-

ness and charm have not faded; her passing was the poet's most poignant sorrow. But the Tagore family abounded in personality and talent. I will mention only the poet's two artist nephews, Gaganendranath and Abanindranath. The latter, is able with pen as with brush, is still living.

From childhood Rabindranath was a writer. Fame was his very quickly. He visited London in 1877 and spent a year. He did not particularly like either us or our country, but he read with Henry Morley the "Religion Medici" and some Shakespeare, for which he has remained grateful. Shortly after return to India he read Shelley's "Hymn to intellectual beauty." "I felt as if I could have written it," he once told me. He read voluminously, from Kalidasa, and "the Bengali Vaishnava poets, to the English poets. The man who 60 years ago translated poems by August Webster and Ernest Myers has translated also T.S. Elliot's "Journey of the Magi."

His own work attained maturity in 1890 with "Manasi" ("The Mind's Embodiment"), a lyric collection of great variety and mastery over form. A group of savage attacks on his countrymen's bigotry and social customs aroused anger. Rabindranath poured out drama and lyric and satire, short story, and critical and didactic essay: edited and practically wrote *Sadhana*, the best periodical Bengali has known; revisited England, and travelled on the Continent. In India he was now living at Shileida, on the Ganges, in charge of the family estates, an experience which gave him his wide knowledge of his people. This period ended in 1895, when politics and religion took hold of a mind hitherto mainly poetic and literary. In 1901 he founded his now famous university as a school at Santiniketan ("Home of peace") on a wide open plain where grew three noble *chalm* trees that had been the Maharshi's place of meditation. He became a novelist, and after a while political passion died down, and he wrote the religious poetry for which the outside world best knows him.

In January, 1912, his countrymen celebrated his jubilee with packed meetings in Calcutta Town Hall and elsewhere. He was ill and in constant pain, and for change went on to England, on the steamer whiling away time by translating the book afterwards entitled "Gitanjali" ("Song Offerings"). During a desultory stay in London "it occurred to me to try to get into touch with Rothenstein. I had met him at

Abanindranath's place, but no one had told him I was a poet; he just knew me as one of the Tagore family. So I looked up his telephone number and rang him up." Rothenstein came, and presently "said he had heard I was a poet. Could I give him any idea of my work?" Rothenstein took away the "Gitanjali" translations, and fame came swiftly, to the climax of the Nobel Prize award in 1913.

Translation never did worse injustice than in his case. He is a poet of immense range and variety, skilful in drama, narrative, lyric, satire; a novelist, critic, short story writer, preacher, politician; the inventor of new metres without number; a musician who has made more new tunes than any Indian since Akbar's great musician, Tan Sen and in recently years he has discovered artistic gifts. He is an extraordinary effective public speaker; he has been social reformer and educationist and a pioneer in agriculture. He has touched India's existence at all points. His nation has endured much frankness from him. He has on occasion said hard things of our own people, but never has anger blurred his perception of our qualities. When his mind was most wretched, over the tragedy of Amritsar and over the civil war in Ireland, Rabindranath could yet overcome bitterness, to witness to "the inherent love of justice that thrives in the heart of his country in spite of all aberrations." In return he can comfort himself with the assurance that because of him countless men and women in our country can never think other than only of the race that can produce such men as Tagore.

28 February, 1940

**THE TIMES**

p11c4(D)

### UNIVERSITY NEWS

#### OXFORD TO HONOUR DR. TAGORE OXFORD. FEB. 27

In Convocation this afternoon it was agreed, *nemine contradicente*, to confer the honorary degree of D. Litt. on Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. The degree will be conferred by delegates appointed by the Chancellor.

7 March, 1940

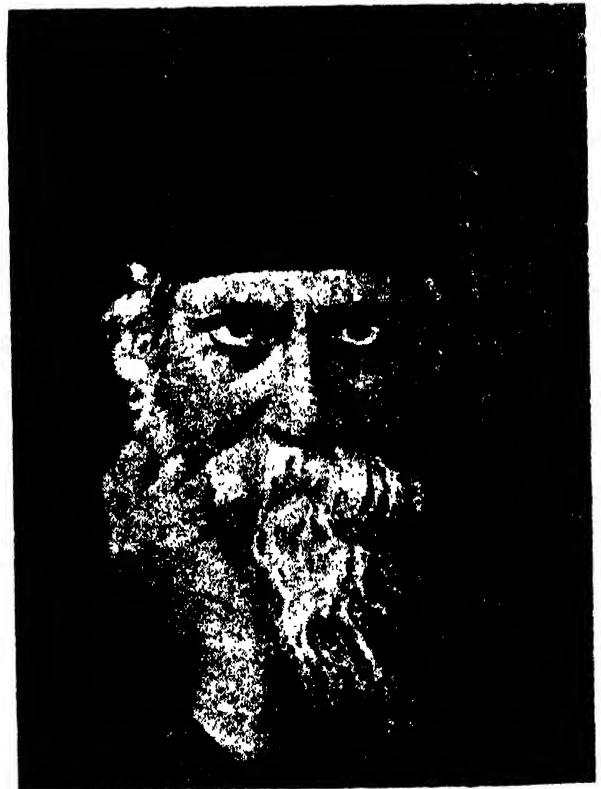
**THE LISTENER**

p461(W)

### Did You hear That?

#### HOMAGE TO TAGORE

In all its long career, the University of Oxford has only three times conferred an honorary doctorate in absence. The third occasion occurred quite recently when homage was paid to Rabindranath Tagore, of whom some personal impressions were given by his friend EDWARD THOMPSON (Home Service, February 28): 'In January, 1912, when Tagore's countrymen celebrated his jubilee by a wildly enthusiastic meeting in Calcutta Town Hall, no one outside India suspected that here was an outstanding man. Tagore himself was ill and discouraged; as he put it to me, "I longed to go to the



Rabindranath Tagore

West again. It was there that I thought the new spirit of mankind was living and working". He journeyed to England therefore, and on the steamer revised translations he had made of some of his poems.

'Let me relate what followed, from his own conversation. "I reached London and stayed in a hotel ...Everyone seemed like phantoms. The hotel used to empty after breakfast and I watched the crowded streets. I was in despair ... It was not possible to know this humanity or to enter into the heart of another place. Then it occurred to me to try to get into touch with Rothenstein". (That was Sir William Rothenstein, the artist.) "I had met him in India, but no one had told him I was a poet; he just knew me as one of the Tagore family. So I looked up his telephone number and rang him up". Rothenstein came at once, and one day presently he said "he had heard I was a poet. Could I give him any idea of my work? I told him I had some prose translations but knew the English was not good". However, Rothenstein took these translations away and invited artists and authors to his house, where Mr. Yeats, the Irish poet, gave a reading. Let me return to Tagore's own story "Yeats read some very short poems, while I was miserable. How could these make any impression. I asked. They would glide over their minds. You know, your people are not demonstrative and they made no sign". How well you and I know this silence of our people and how often we are believed to be cold and unfeeling! But Tagore was startled by letters that followed, and the India Society published the poems as *Gitanjali* - "Song Offerings". Other books followed, then the greatest distinction of all. A year later, at Santiniketan, his famous school, one night, when we were talking together, Tagore was called away. A few minutes later his headmaster, Ajit Chakravarti, came and told me, "We have received great news, Mr. Tagore has been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature"."

17 June, 1940

**THE TIMES**

p5c4(D)

### **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S APPEAL TO U.S.**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, in a telegram to president Roosevelt, says (according to Reuter):-

"To-day we stand in awe before the fearfully destructive force that has so suddenly swept the world . All our individual problems of politics are to-day merged into one supreme world of politics which I believe is seeking help in the United States of America as the last refuge of spiritual man, and these few lines of mine merely convey my hope, even if unnecessary, that she will not fail in her mission to stand against the universal disaster that appears so imminent."

8 August, 1940

**THE NEWS CHRONICLE**

p3c6(D)

### **OXFORD HONOUR FOR TAGORE**

Santiniketan (Bengal), Wednesday - Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, received the degree of Doctor of Letters *Honoris Causa* of Oxford University at Santiniketan, Bengal, this afternoon.

This is believed to be the first time that a special convocation has been held outside Oxford.

8 August, 1940

**THE TIMES**

p4c5(D)

### **OXFORD AND SIR R. TAGORE**

#### **DEGREE CONFERRED IN BENGAL VILLAGE**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, received the degree of Doctor of Letters *Honoris Causa* at Oxford University at a special Convocation of Oxford University at the village of Santiniketan, Bengal,

yesterday afternoon (says Reuter). Sir Rabindranath Tagore has founded his own university at Santiniketan.

This is believed to be the first time that a special Convocation has been held outside Oxford.

Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, who conferred the degree, represented Oxford university. Delegates from Oxford and *alumni* were among the gathering of scholars from different parts of India.

The 80-year old poet thanked Oxford University in Sanskrit "for its precious gift to him and the country."

8 August, 1940

**THE TIMES**

p5c3(D)

### In Gangem Defluit Isis

Masters of Arts of Oxford University may have been perturbed yesterday afternoon by a sudden and peculiar feeling of levitation. They will be relieved this morning to find the symptoms explained. The cause was temporary projection of their astral bodies over some thousands of miles of Europe and Asia, in order to hold a Convocation of the University at the village of Santiniketan, in Bengal. That so unusual a proceeding was within the bounds of academic law is guaranteed by the authority of so great a jurist as SIR MAURICE GWYER, who, as a fellow of the Chancellor's own College, was appropriately nominated to preside in his place. The right to indulge in it is doubtless included in that *jus ubique docendi*, which the University prides itself on having enjoyed from before the memory of man - in contrast with another institution, on which the like privilege had to be conferred by human agency in 1308.

More seriously anxiety may be caused by the effect on the venerable frame of Alma mater of this strenuous jaunt on the magic carpet. But even if she feels a little dizzy, she may reflect that, that is

a slight price to pay for the accession to the ranks of her sons of one of the greatest of living poets, SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, in the capacity of an honorary Doctor of Letters.

11 August, 1940

**THE OBSERVER**

p4c1(S)

Section: **THE WORLD THIS WEEK**

### OXFORD GOES TO TAGORE

The genius of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet has long been recognised by English men of letters. The verdict of the intellectual and artistic worlds was endorsed last week by an honorary degree from the University of Oxford, conferred at his own village by a special convocation there assembled. No distinction could have derived greater emphasis from geography.

30 September, 1940

**THE TIMES**

p3c6(D)

### SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

CALCUTTA, SEPT. 29

Sir Rabindranath Tagore is ill and was brought to Calcutta to-day as an operation may be necessary.

30 September, 1940

**THE TIMES**

p3c6(D)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who has been seriously ill for more than three weeks, was yesterday pronounced out of danger, says a Reuter message from Calcutta.

1941

1 April, 1941

**THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**  
p6c5-6(D)

## **DR. TAGORE AND THE WAR**

### **A "Diabolical Faith"**

The secretary of the Tagore Society in London has received the following statement about the present world war by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore:

"The failure of humanity in the West to preserve the worth of their civilization and the dignity of man which they had taken centuries to build up weighs like a nightmare on my mind. It seems clear to me that this failure is due to men's repudiation of moral values in the guidance of their national affairs and to their belief that everything is determined by a mere physical chain of events which could be manipulated by man's cunning or might. The consequences of this belief are proving terrible to man.

"The first experiment in this diabolical faith was launched in Manchuria. What it has demonstrated is this - that though the poor and innocent people of China have suffered, those that were responsible for this suffering and for like suffering elsewhere, have all been drawn into this vortex. Those who built their power on moral cynicism are themselves proving its victims. The nemesis is daily proving more ruthless.

"We are in the habit calling Genghis Khan's hordes barbarians but not even the terrible Mongols were guilty of such gross betrayal of humanity as the so-called civilised nations of to-day are perpetrating before our very eyes. But in the very act of this condemnation one is arrested by one's sympathy for their sufferings. For their own peoples are paying the price of these wrongs.

"In the midst of this insane orgy of violence and destruction I shall continue to hold fast to my faith in the final recovery of man's lost heritage of moral worth".

8 August, 1941

**THE DAILY HERALD**  
p4c4(D)

### **Tagore's Last message**

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, the famous poet, died at Calcutta yesterday following an operation. He was 80.

It was disclosed last night that in his last message to London he said:

The failure of humanity in the West to preserve the worth of their civilisation and the dignity of man weighs like a nightmare on my mind.

It seems clear to me that this failure is due to men's repudiation of moral values and to their belief that everything is determined by a physical chain of events.

The first experiment in this diabolical faith was launched in Manchuria. Those who built their power on moral cynicism are themselves proving its victims. The nemesis is daily proving more ruthless.

8 August, 1941

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH AND MORNING POST**  
p1c6(D)

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the famous Indian poet died at his home at Calcutta yesterday. He was 80 years of age. He recently underwent a serious operation.

[Peterborough's Notes and picture - Page 4]

[Contd on p4c4]

## **LONDON DAY BY DAY**

### **Making a Reputation**

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, who has died at 80, had at least one unique item in his long record as a writer. Though he was unknown to Europe, or almost anywhere outside Bengal, he became suddenly famous here and in America when he was already 50.

A year later he received the Nobel Prize for literature.

This was largely - if not entirely - due to the impression made by his most famous book of poems, "Gitanjali," or rather by his own admirable prose translation of them under the name of "Song Offerings."

This he showed to Sir William Rothenstein, who transmitted his enthusiasm for it to Mr. W. B. Yeats. A notable dinner in Tagore's honour in London made the poet's reputation.

### ***Remained a Knight***

He had written poetry, plays, fiction, essays, criticism, politics. He was a religious leader and a preacher of surpassing eloquence. In 1901 he founded in Bengal a university of his own. There, as in all his work, he proclaimed the doctrine of the brotherhood of mankind. This he did with all the advantages of his outstanding personality and remarkable presence.

After the Amritsar incident Tagore asked to be relieved of the knighthood which he had been conferred on him a few years earlier. He was persuaded, however, to reconsider this request.

### ***Subconscious Art***

Only a few years ago Tagore suddenly dawned on the art world as an experimenter in black and white. No one understood his pictures, which had no titles and were said to be impressions of the artist's subconscious mind. He used to begin a picture by making a large, formless blot with his pen, and build the rest around it.

Whether Tagore knew it or not, this was the method adopted in the black-and-white drawings of the Spanish painter, Zuloaga, whose work is represented in many museums and collections. A dense black blotch was always at the centre of these compositions.

It used to be thought that Mr. Churchill had turned to art fairly late in life for he never took it up until after he had resigned from the Admiralty in 1915.

He was then 41, but Tagore was well over 70 when he began. I have seen a couple of his strange productions in the Croydon Town Hall - of all unexpected places.

**PETERBOROUGH**

*8 August, 1941*

### **THE NEWS CHRONICLE**

p3c1(D)

### **Tagore, Asia's poet Laureate, Dies at 80**

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, died in Calcutta yesterday. He was 80.

To the younger generation, Sir Rabindranath Tagore was little but a name; but in 1912 that name appeared in the literary sky like a meteor, sudden and brilliant.

With one slight volume of his mystical and imaginative poems translated by himself into English, he conquered Europe and America at the age of 50.

Born in India in 1861 of a family of hereditary genius, justly reckoned the intellectual flower of Bengal. He had made his name a household word in the Bengali-speaking world with poems and dramas, stories, essays and sermons.

On the strength of his first collection of poems in English, "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings), he was welcomed to England in 1912, championed by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913.

### **TACT**

He was knighted in 1915; although in 1919, after Amritsar, he asked the Government to revoke his knighthood in protest against the British policy of repression in the Punjab, a request tactfully averted.

In India, while his literary output went on undiminished, he still conducted his experiment in education - his estate at Bolpur, converted into a school for boys, expanded in 1912 into a university in which East and West might meet.

*8 August, 1941*

### **THE TIMES**

p4c5(D)

### **SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE DEATH IN CALCUTTA**

We announce with regret the death of SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, the great Indian

poet, novelist, and thinker, which as reported by our Calcutta Correspondent, took place in Calcutta yesterday. Normally he lived at Shantiniketan in the country in the Burdwan division, where there is a school and a university established by him. He was taken to Calcutta for an operation a few days ago, but during the last two days he was obviously sinking. Tagore was one of the greatest cultural forces in modern India.

Lord Linlithgow, Viceroy of India, and Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, are among those who have sent messages of sympathy to the family of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Lord Linlithgow's message (states Reuter), which was conveyed by the Governor of Bengal, was as follows:

I am deeply grieved to learn of the death of your father. It marks the end of a long life of service inspired by high ideals nobly conceived and actively pursued, and will be an inspiring example for generations to come. In him India has lost one of her greatest sons, who through his manifold gifts and achievements helped to raise her in the estimation of the world. Please accept my sincere condolences for your irreparable loss.

Sir Maurice Gwyer's message was:

I have learned with the deepest regret of the death of your father early this afternoon. In him Bengal has lost a son whose long and distinguished career was inspired by service to his fellow-men, whose pre-eminence as a poet and author enriched Bengali literature and brought him and his country world-wide renown. His noble ideals, no less than his literary achievements, will live as an example to future generations.

10 August, 1941

**THE OBSERVER**

p2c5(S)

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

**BY EDWARD THOMPSON**

Tagore was a poet, dramatist, novelist, critic, short story writer, ethical and religious and social and educational reformer, preacher, artist, a superb actor, a great letter-writer, a fascinating conver-

sationalist. I once heard him jest at his own expense, about this unparalleled abundance. "I may not be the most luminous author that ever lived, but I think I can claim to be the most voluminous." (The hit has been ascribed to George IV, at Gibbon. "Did I say the most luminous author of 'The Decline and Fall'? I mean voluminous.")

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His poetry needs drastic retranslation. His first English book, "Gitanjali" was his best - haunted book, over which he had brooded until his spirit passed into it. "Chitra," his second shared this independent quality. The texts are virtually different dramas and poems, the Bengali luxuriant and rich, the English chiselled and swiftly moving, but both lovely. Tagore more and more suppressed form his English versions whatever appeared to him hard to get across; the tricks he played with his own work are unbelievable. He grew remorseful, and wrote to me "When I began to falsify my own coinage I did it in sport. But now I am appalled by the enormity of, my transgression and am willing to make any reparation in my power." "Gitanjali," "Chitra," the best of his short stories - these books, at any rate can stand.

\*\*\*

His majesty and beauty of presence were the expression of a magnanimous and noble spirit. Thirty years ago he foresaw the ruin which nationalism and mechanism were to inflict. A passionate patriot, no man was ever franker to his own people or more free from superstition of any kind. I remember now chiefly his towering generosity after General Dyer's action at Amritsar: "A land should be judged by its best products, and I have no hesitation in saying that the best Englishmen are the best specimens of humanity in the world. With all our grievances against the English nation, I cannot help loving your country, which has given me some of my dearest friends I am intensely glad of this fact, for it is hateful to hate."

12 August, 1941

**THE TIMES**

p5c4(D)

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir. - The enclosed letter, written to me by Rabindranath Tagore early in the last War, appears to me in some respects more appropriate to the present war, the part of Faust being of course assigned to Germany.

Yours faithfully,  
MARGARET WOODS

*Vine Cottage, Thursley, Godalming, Surrey,  
Aug. 10*

\* \* \*

CALCUTTA, July 9, 1915.

Dear Mrs. Woods. - It is kind of you to remember me, especially when the time is troubled. My only hope is that this sudden rushing down of life-flood through channels of death will break through the accumulation of dead matter of centuries that the sluggish stream of prosperity always brings in its wake. I believe it is a struggle for emancipation of Europe from the allurements of Science. Your heart must bleed to show that it is there in your civilization. It seems to my mind that Goethe's drama of Faust is being acted in your history. When Man enters into a contract with Mephistopheles for enlarging his sphere of enjoyment and possession, he ends by killing his very object. Please accept my thanks and know that all my sympathy is with you in this terrible trial. Yours, &c.,

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

14 August, 1941

**THE LISTENER**

p236(W)

## Rabindranath Tagore : 1861-1941

By EDWARD THOMPSON

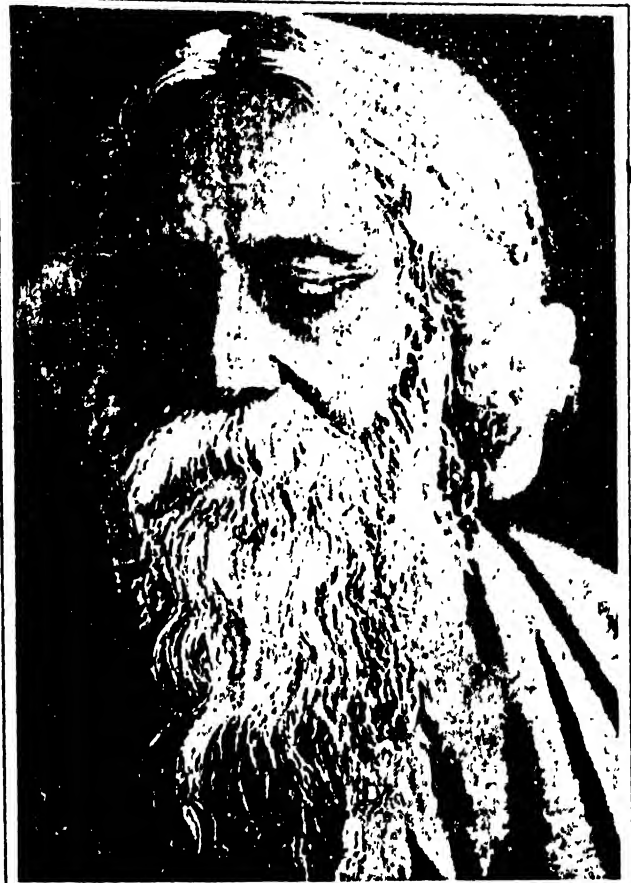
WITH the death of Rabindranath Tagore, at the age of 80, there has passed away a man such as comes to a nation only once in many centuries. He takes with him the last that remained of the age in which modern India found herself intellectually. When Tennyson died in 1892, it was said by many that the passing of the Victorian age, which had been so variously and intensely active, was symbolised by the passing of the poet whose 83 years had covered the immense changes that had made the nineteenth century so unlike the centuries before it. But Tagore was far more versatile and full of interests than Tennyson, and meant much more to India and to the rest of the world than Tennyson meant to Britain or Europe. At the height of his fame his visits to such lands as Hungary, China, Japan, Persia, were treated as the visits of an ambassador; planes were at his disposal, government took charge of his reception. He touched almost every branch of human activity; I think the only form of writing he never attempted was history. He achieved distinction as poet, novelist, short-story writer, critic, essayist, social and religious reformer, educationist, artist and musician. He was a great preacher and in his prime a superb actor.

In 1861, when this man who was to do so much to make India known to the West was born, few Indians had travelled outside their country. The Mutiny bitterness still smouldered, India was a remote land, her railways hardly begun, her communication difficult. Her first modern universities had only recently been founded.

Rabindranath was supremely fortunate in his home. His father, Devendranath, was the man who revived the Brahmo Samaj, the theistic society founded by Rammohan Roy, the greatest Indian of modern times before Rabindranath. No man was ever more free from every kind of superstition than Rabindranath, and for this he owed much to the influence of his noble father, to whom, long before his death, his countrymen gave the name of Maharshi or 'Great Seer'. Eighty six years ago the Brahmo Samaj was a group

such as very few lands and times can parallel. Almost every man in Bengal (which led the Renaissance of India) of exceptional character and ability, and they were many, belonged to it, and Rabindranath knew them all. His brothers were among their leaders. Satyendranath Tagore was the first Indian to pass into the Civil Service; Joytirindranath, an artist to whose rare skill Sir William Rothenstein has paid tribute, was a man whose ceaseless activities, as a promoter of river steamers and every sort of business and social and journalistic pioneer work, made him poor, and he was one of the noblest and most fascinating men that ever lived. Perhaps the greatest of these Tagore brothers was Debendranath [sic. Dwijendranath] also a poet and in extreme old age revered by all India as a saint and philosopher. But not the Brahmo Samaj only, every one of the numerous poets and reformers of that time looked to this family as their centre, and Rabindranath knew them all. He was famous in Bengal while yet in his teens. During the 'nineties, by the magazine *Sadhana*, the finest periodical Bengal has known, he set his stamp on the thought of his nation and had more than any other man to do with making them a nation. At the end of the century, he left his home (still using it for occasional retreat) at Shilida, among 'the wild ducks' (as he used to put it in private letters) of the beginnings of the Ganges delta. He founded at Santiniketan ('Abode of Peace'), on the drier uplands, the school which is now also a University and agricultural training institution and famous all over the world. His fiftieth birthday was made the occasion for a tremendous recognition in the Town Hall of Calcutta. After his immense and incessant toil, he felt ill and exhausted, and in 1913 he revisited England, and published with the India Society his first book of translations, *Gitanjali*, which made him instantaneously world-famous. That same year he was awarded the Nobel Prize.

It was said of Byron that he 'took the English spirit on pilgrimage through Europe.' Rabindranath took the Indian spirit on pilgrimage through the world. Perhaps he lectured too much (but he needed money for Shantiniketan) and he certainly published too many books. He despaired - as I hold, unnecessarily - of ever getting English readers to understand anything strange to them, and more and more he toned down in translation or omitted whatever was



Sir Rabindranath Tagore

E.N.A.

Fig. 58 *The Listener*, 14 August, 1941

characteristically Indian, which often was also what was imaginative and gripping and powerful. 'When I began to falsify my own coinage' (he wrote to me in reply to my complaint) 'I did it in sport. But now I am appalled at the enormity of my transgressions, and I am willing to make any reparation in my power.' His poems will have to be drastically retranslated some day, and only then will his greatness and range be understood. Meanwhile, the reader who does not know Bengal, can see something of his quality in *Gitanjali*, *Chitra*, his *Reminiscences*, and his short stories, many of which (for instance, 'Hungry Stones', 'Subha', 'The Castaway', 'Living or Dead') are as fine as any ever written.

As a thinker he was much in advance of his times. His *Nationalism*, published in 1916, was I think, the first book to point out so clearly the menace of that cult of the nation which has since drenched

the world in blood. He foresaw, decades ago, the mess which the machine was going to make of beauty and individuality. He was a passionate patriot, but also a constant lover of England. No man was ever more courageous and franker to his own people - or more generous to others. 'With all our grievances against the English nation,' he wrote at a time of deep humiliation and bitterness in India (1921), 'I cannot help loving your country, which has given me some of my dearest friends. I am intensely glad of this fact, for it is hateful to hate.'

16 August, 1941

### THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

p157-158(V)

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

It was Tagore's misfortune that his first book, *Gitanjali*, appeared on the eve (1913) of the First World War; his poetry was bound to date swiftly. It was an additional misfortune that English, the European language he knew best, was not in his youth rich in criticism. Matthew Arnold was too concerned with style and with the presence or absence of "urbanity." The question of Tagore's place is tied up also with his translation methods, that "falsifying of my own coinage" of which he wrote to me, his cutting away of what he thought hard to get across to Western readers. John Keats (said is brother) was no more "like Johnny Keats than he was like the Holy Ghost," yet it took decades to disentangle John and Johnny. It may take even longer with the two Tagores.

Nobility is a quality now out of fashion, and Tagore was outstandingly noble. It is the adjective which best describes the remarkable society, the Brahmo Samaj, into which he was born. Only once or twice in world history has a society of such high general level, in character and versatile ability, existed, and Tagore's family were at its centre. It was not strange that the course of his whole life was set early, in a consistent striving towards truth and freedom from superstition and prejudice and towards fullness and catholicity. He began as a poet, yet even in his twenties he was a poet fearlessly and often savagely critical of all that was base or narrow. He satirised the spectacled lolling student who chattered boastfully and did no genuine thinking. "Wisdom sprouts in

our brains, as we learn how that hero Cromwell tumbled off his king's head, as a boy with a stick sends ripe mangoes scattering ... In what respect are we inferior to the English? ... We can learn all they write and repeat in Bengali ..."

Max Muller has said that we are "Aryans." The Mutiny, which ended two years before he was born, had left rulers and people utterly estranged in mutual hatred, and pride and humiliation caught at the praise of the new Western scholarship and the theosophists. Tagore had no use for the struttings of the Neo-Hinduism this praise encouraged. In 1888, after a mob of young "Aryans" had assaulted a Salvationist, he wrote scathingly of their cowardly patriotism. He refused to idealise anything irrational or vile or even merely silly. His *Loving Conversation of a newly Wedded Bengali Couple* gives the first bedroom scene between the old husband and his girl wife. As to transmigration, a theory whose imaginative value he recognised, when I asked him if it were true that his father, the Maharshi ("Great Seer,") went against Brahmo teaching and latterly accepted it, he replied "My father never believed in that fairy tale." I remember his students at Santiniketan asking if they might celebrate the festival of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning, in his grounds. "No, we do not want that nonsense here," he said brusquely.

He wrote great poetry even before *Manasi* (1890), his first really mature work - for example, *Sea-Waves*, on the wreck of a crowded pilgrim ship, which I think every bit as fine as Gerard Hopkin's *Deutschland*. But I am now concerned with the man. In the nineties he lived at Shileida, on the Ganges [sic], managing the Tagore estates. In his magazine *Sadhana* he poured out poems, short stories, criticism, drama, and unceasing social propaganda. He outraged orthodox Hinduism long before the alien Government set a spy in his school and the police kept his dossier. But he did more than this. Cruelty anywhere made him "ferocious" (a favourite word); he was the Indian who first drew his country's attention to lynching. Then he felt he must do something yet more constructive, and as the century closed he founded Santiniketan ("Home of Peace.") His aim was not simply a school but a place where India parcelled and crushed, might find herself and might learn also that even patriotism was not enough. He insisted always that whatever was best in Europe she must accept with both hands, and that

our scientific conquests, our supposed materialism, were at heart as much the result of insight as the religious lyrics of a Kabir or a Chandidas. He had no patience with those Popes who divide the mind's Americas into mechanistic achievement for the West and spiritual greatness for the East.

He was a majestic and tremendous public speaker. "No one who heard it will ever forget," said Prasanta Mahalanobis, "his 'Address on Working as Our Master bids' (1918). He held fifteen hundred people spellbound for nearly two hours." I once witnessed an equal triumph, on the centenary of the Brahmo Samaj. During the Partition of Bengal agitation (1905) he experienced his one period of intense nationalism and made his only national Congress appearance. His people marked his fiftieth birthday with a gigantic ovation in Calcutta Town Hall. But he was ill and dispirited and went to England. Years of renown and suffering followed. The war was a misery, and afterwards the Amritsar humiliation made him attempt to return his knighthood. I think his Oxford degree was the one honour he greatly valued, and when it came at last I am glad to think it was given with a frankness that had in it a measure of reparation and remorse.

Political India's curse, he held, was "mendicancy," the slavish begging and accepting of "boons" from a Government that was indifferent to what was deepest and noblest in the race it ruled. He stood aloof except when a genuine stand was being made. He did not like Gandhi's spinning wheel or methods that seemed merely to send India's leaders to jail. But he made no mistake about Gandhi's greatness and achievement, and with Nehru his friendship was one of complete understanding and affection. For the two men wanted the same things, social reconstruction and acceptance of life in its fullness. Gandhi once called him "The great Sentinel," and this was what he became - a towering figure standing outside our struggles and problems yet watching and helping with all his strength. He grew more and more "Left," and intolerant of bigotry and obscurantism. He remarked, when I last visited India, twenty months ago, that he should like to live to see Russia India's invader, since she was the only power that would not hesitate to bomb equally those symbolically contiguous shrines, the mosque and Jagannath temple at Puri! India's and the Age's sentinel he foresaw the rape of natural

beauty and individuality by the machine, expressing this in his striking drama, *Muktadhara* ("The Free Stream,") 1922. He predicted in his wise little book, *Nationalism*, 1916, what wretchedness the cult of the nation would work for mankind.

Yet he distinguished between the people and the nation. The English people India "felt as we feel the sun" but the nation was a clogging and blinding mist [sic]. Magnanimous to the last, when France made her despairing appeal to the United States, Tagore, forgetting that he belonged to a subject people, sent Roosevelt his own separate appeal for her. He died before England freed his country. But he himself found his own freedom long ago, alike from subjection to foreign rule and from bitterness and ignorance of every kind.

**EDWARD THOMPSON**

19 August, 1941

**THE TIMES**

p5c4(D)

### **RABINDRANATH TAGORE TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES**

Sir. - The late Rabindranath Tagore's opinion expressed in the letter quoted in your issue of August 12 - namely, "I believe it is a struggle for emancipation of Europe from the allurements of Science," cannot be allowed to pass without comment. A struggle there is, emancipation there must be, but a struggle to be emancipated from science or from reason. No. As struggle there must be against the evil which used the powers which science provides to mankind, and a struggle against the evil which uses the powers on the side of all that is right - a battle for greater wisdom. In the words of a Western poet,

"Man, in the unsearchable darkness,

knoweth one thing

that as he is, so was he made: and if  
the Essence

and characteristic faculty of humanity  
is our conscient Reason and our  
desire of knowledge,

That was nature's Purpose in the  
making of man."

Yours truly,  
A. C. EGERTON.

22 August, 1941

**THE TIMES**

p5c4(D)

### **TAGORE AND SCIENCE**

#### **TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES**

Sir. - It may be doubted whether the quotation given is Professor Egerton's attitude to science. When I was staying with him in 1937 I raised with him this question of the impact of science on modern life with special reference to India. He had been deploring the mills and the factories that had sprung up on the Ganges, the river he loved so well; in his little houseboat moored alongside its grey sandy banks, with only the wildfowl as his neighbours, he said, he had written his best poems 40 years ago. He would like to go back and recapture the spirit of the time, but knew that he could not.

I said that science could do much to effect technical and material improvement, but could it, without harm, be grafted on to Indian culture? Would the change be deplored on the Ganges spread to other phases of life? He replied that the change must come, that India must accept and assimilate Western science or she would stagnate and perish. I asked if he feared a conflict between science and religion such as had arisen in England. He said he would welcome such a conflict; it would be all to the good if a wage of negation, even of atheism, spread over the country. It would be like a purifying flame that would burn the weeds and leave the soul cleansed to allow the truth to grow and to spread. Truth always grows because it is truth. He went on in his beautiful musical voice and ended by saying that it is our duty, having recognized the truth, to work for it and fight for it no matter how fearful the odds; if necessary, to die fighting for it.

No scientist could have better expressed the spirit of science.

Yours faithfully,  
E.J. RUSSELL.

*Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden.  
Aug. 20.*

25 August, 1941

**THE TIMES**

p5c4(D)

### **TAGORE AND SCIENCE**

#### **TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES**

Sir. - Sir John Russell is of course right. Tagore always insisted, in his lectures and writings, and private letters, that the scientific achievement of the West was as essentially a spiritual achievement as India's religion and philosophy. He desired with a passion that was often almost anguish that science should be used to conquer India's poverty and physical wretchedness. But two things he hated: the narrow cult of personality whose fruits have been evil in every land, and the tyranny of the machine that has made men and women into implements and has ravaged the natural beauty of India as well as of Europe and America.

Yours sincerely,  
EDWARD THOMPSON

Oxford, Aug.22.

18 September, 1941

**THE TIMES**

p7c5(D)

To enable British admirers to pay tribute to Rabindranath Tagore, the India Society has arranged a memorial meeting, to be held at Overseas House on Tuesday, September 30, at 4.30. There will be a recital from the works of the poet, and the speakers will include Sir Francis Younghusband (who will preside), Mr. Laurence Binyon, Dr. Ernest Rhys, Sir William Rothenstein, and Mr. Edward Thompson.

1 October, 1941

**THE TIMES**

p7c3(D)

## IN MEMORY OF TAGORE

### INDIA SOCIETY'S MEETING

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND, presiding yesterday at a meeting convened by the India Society for British admirers of Rabindranath Tagore to pay tribute to his memory, announced that the Society would hold an annual Tagore meeting at which some aspect of his many-sided genius would be expounded and discussed and that the full proceedings would be published. It was the society which first published in English the now world-famous *Gitanjali* and the lovely drama *Chitra*.

Lord Zetland, the president, wrote that in his understanding of literature and art Tagore possessed qualities which entitled him to be regarded as a citizen of the world rather than of any particular country: yet his whole being was permeated with a passionate attachment to his own land.

Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, wrote that the lustre of Tagore's world-wide fame was one which neither war nor political antagonisms could dim. The range of his art and teaching recalled the versatility of such Renaissance figures as Michael Angelo and Leonardo. By his rendering of some of his finest Bengali poems into fastidious English, he enabled the West to sample the beauty of the civilization and culture of India, of which he remained to the last so zealous a champion. Messages were also received from Sir John Anderson, Sir Michael Sadler, and others; and representatives of the Royal Society of Literature and the Poetry Society were present.

The speakers included Mr. Laurence Binyon, Sir William Rothenstein, Mr. Edward Thompson, Dr Ernest Rhys, and Lord Lytton. Readings of some passages from the poet's work were given.

Mr. BINYON said that when some 30 years ago, he was with Tagore in a crowded London tube train he felt that the genius of India stood before him embodied in one of noble personality. There was the impression of outward dignity and inward serenity.

What the poet thought of the crowd he did not know; but if he had seen crowd a like London throng in these days of trial he would have known better of what stuff they were really made.

27 December, 1941

**THE TIMES**

p6c4(D)

## IN MEMORY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

At a meeting of the India Society held in London in the autumn in memory of Rabindranath Tagore it was decided, on the motion of Sir William Rothenstein, to hold an annual gathering at which some aspect of his many-sided genius would be described and illustrated. The first of these meetings had recently been held at Overseas House. Mrs. Freud-Marle (who had met the poet on the Continent and recited his works in his presence) acted in scenes from *Chitra*, and was assisted by Mr. Sudin N. Ghose and M. Mukerjee, the musician.



## Notes

*The Times* (13 July, 1912):

**W[illiam] B[utler] Yeats** (1865-1930) An Irish poet, playwright and nationalist; led the Irish literary revival of the late nineteenth century that stimulated new appreciation of traditional literature; one of the founders of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin; awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1923. Celebrated works include *The Celtic Twilight*, *The Countess Kathleen*, *Reveries over Childhood* and *Dramatis Personae*. **J[ohn] W[illiam] Mackail** (1859-1945): A Scottish classical scholar. His fame rests on his studies on *Virgil* and on his *Latin Literature*; professor of poetry at Oxford in 1906. **[Frederick] Herbert Trench** (1865-1923): An Irish poet and playwright; wrote several volumes of verse namely *Deirdre Wed* and *New Poems*. later on became an Artistic Director of the Haymarket Theatre in London. **R[obert] B[ontine] Cunningham Graham** (1852-1936): A Scottish travel and fiction writer; spent earlier part of his life in Argentina; a Liberal member of Parliament for Scotland but took an active interest in the early formation of the British Labour Party; a supporter of Scottish Nationalist Movement. **H[enry] W[ood] Nevinson** (1856-1941): A British journalist and essayist; President of National Council of Civil Liberties. His publications include *Lines of Life*, *Essays of Freedom and Rebellion* and a study of *Goethe*. **H[erbert] G[eorge] Wells** (1866-1946): An English novelist, journalist, sociologist, historian and a popular science-fiction writer who had a great influence in the movement of changing the twentieth-century society morals and religious beliefs. **Cecil [James] Sharp** (1859-1946): An English musical researcher whose work as a collector of English folksongs and dance influenced the twentieth century British composers; Master at Ludgrove School and later became the Principal of Hampstead Conservatoire, London. **J[ames] D[rummond] Anderson** (1859-1946): A member of the Indian Civil Service; lecturer in Bengali at Cambridge University. **E[rnest] B[infield] Havell** (1861-1934): An English Art teacher; Superintendent Madras School of Art; Principal Calcutta School of Art, later became an attache of British Legation. **T[homas] W Arnold** (1864-1930): India Office advisor to Indian students in England. **R[alph] Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958): An English composer and founder of the nationalistic movement in English music; Professor of composition at the Royal College of Music, London. His compositions include orchestral, stage, chamber and vocal music. **T[homas] W Rolleston** (1857-1920): Editor of *Dublin University Review*; first Honorary Secretary, Irish Literary Society. "**Mr. Yeats, in proposing the toast...said...**": Yeats' address was later incorporated in the Introduction of *Gitanjali*. "**'The Imitation of Christ' by Thomas a Kempis.**": Thomas a Kempis (1380-1471) was a German mystical writer whose *Di Imitation Christi* has been translated from Latin into many languages. Kempis stresses ascetism rather than mysticism, and moderate – not extreme – austerity. Tagore was also fond of this book. Incidentally a reference to this book is found in one of his novels – *Gora* – where the heroin on one occasion is reading this book. "**Mr Yeats then read...**": Yeats read three poems in that reception. The published two poems are No.95 (*I was not aware*) and No. 22 (*In the deep shadows*) and the third poem which was not published was No. 64 (*On the slope of the desolate river among tall grasses*) in *Gitanjali*. **W[illiam] Rothenstein** (1872-1945): An English artist known for his fine potrait drawings of contemporaries; Principal, Royal College of Arts. He had a great interest of Indian art, literature, music and architecture; a leading founder of India Society. Correspondences of Tagore-Rothenstein is edited by Mary Lago in *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of Willam Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore, 1911-41*, Cambridge (Mass), 1972. **Sir Krishna [Govinda] Gupta** (1851-1926): A member of Indian Council of the India Office in Britain.

*The Times* (26 July, 1912)

**George Calderon** (1851-1926): An English playwright, died while in action at Gallipoli during the First World War. ***The Maharani of Arakan***: A romantic comedy by George Calderon, adapted from Tagore's

short-story *Dalya*. The drama was later published by Francis Griffiths (London) in 1915 after the death of its translator.

*The Times* (31 July, 1912)

**Indian Dramatic Society.** Also known as Indian Art, Dramatic and Friendly Society was founded by K.N.Dasgupta, a drama enthusiast in May 1912 at Cromwell Road. Although Mr Dasgupta had produced a number of plays before, *Maharani of Arakan* was perhaps his first production under the Indian Dramatic Society's banner [Thomas] **Traherne** (1636-74): An English poet who wrote *centuries* of religious meditations in prose, as well as poetry, full of strikingly original imagery of the mystic. [Richard] **Crashaw** (1613-49): An English religious poet; his catholic leanings prevented him from receiving anglican orders left for Paris. His famous book of poems in Latin *Epigrammatum Sacrorum Liber* was published in 1634. **George Grossmith** (1847-1912): An English comedian and entertainer who took leading part in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera from 1877 to 1889; along with his brother wrote *Diary of Nobody* in *Punch*.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (7 November, 1912)

**Gitanjali:** A book of poems of Tagore translated by himself in *verse libre* from his original Bengali. The book includes 103 poems of which 53 poems are taken from his Bengali book of verse *Gitanjali*. The remaining poems are taken from *Gitmalya* (16), *Navedya* (15), *Kheya* (11), *Sisu* (3), *Chaitali* (1), *Kalpana* (1), *Smaran* (1), *Utsarga* (1) and one song is taken from his play *Achalayatan*. *Gitanjali* was first published by the India Society on 1 November, 1912; later on published by Macmillan (London) on 1 March, 1913. The book was dedicated to William Rothenstein. **Psalms of David:** A book of the Old Testament consisting of 150 songs and hymns. **George Herbert** (1593-1633): English clergyman and poet. His work *The Temple* contains most of his important verses. [Jean Baptiste Simeon] **Chardine** (1699-1779): French still-life painter. In 1728 he successfully exhibited a series of still-life paintings and almost immediately elected as a member of the Academy. His composition and colouring are comparable with that of the best Dutch and Flemish masters.

*The Athenaeum* (16 November, 1912)

**'for a parallel in Western literatures.... go to Blake or St. Francis':** [William] **Blake** (1757-1827): English poet, painter, engraver and mystic. His celebrated works include *Songs of Innocence*, *Songs of Experience*, *The Book of Thel*, *The marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *The French Revolution*. His important paintings include *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, *Jacob's Dream* and *The Last Judgement*. **St. Francis** [of Assisi] (1181-1226): Italian mystic; founder of the Franciscan Order. His fraternal charity and dynamic leadership drew thousands of followers. The works of St. Francis consist of letters, sermons, ascetic treatises, poverbs and hymns.

*The Nation* (16 November, 1912)

**Jelalu d'Din Rumi** (1207-73): The mystic Sufi poet in Persian language; famous for his exquisite lyrical poetry including a didactic epic - *Masnawi-ye-Manawi*. **Jacopone da Todi** (1230-1306): Italian religious poet, became a Franciscan in 1278; wrote *laude*, which became important in the development of Italian drama. **St. John of the Cross** (sixteenth century): A mendicant friar of the Carmelite order who co-operated with Teresa of Avila to form special nunneries with stricter observance. [Louis Claude de] **St. Martin** (1743-1803): French philosopher. **St. Augustine** (340-430): English Bishop and a dominant personality of the Western Church of his time, also recognised as a great thinker of Christian antiquity. [Johannes] **Eckhart** (1260-1327): German mystic poet whose teachings contributed to the future development of protestantism, romanticism and idealism. **Mechthild von Magdeburg** (1212-83): A German mystic. **Julian of Norwich** (1342-1416): Also known as *Juliana*; a celebrated English mystic whose *Revelation of Divine Love* is generally considered one of the most remarkable documents of medieval religious experience. **"Mr. Yeats quotes a distinguished Bengali Doctor...":** The Bengali Doctor was **Dr**

**Dwijendra Nath Maitra** (1878-1950). A well known physician once attached to Mayo Hospital at Calcutta. **Richard Rolle** (1300-49): A 14th-century English mystical writer in prose and poetry. **Catherine of Genoa** (1447-1510): Italian mystic, later she took the assiduous service to the sick in a hospital at Genoa. **Abt. Vogler** (1749-1814): German composer; real name George Joseph Vogler; established his schools of music at Mannheim, Stockholm and Dramstadt. Although his compositions and theories of music are not popular any more, his name survives in a Browning's poem.

*The Manchester Guardian* (14 January, 1913)

**Bramha Samaj**: A progressive theistic group within the fold of Hinduism founded by Rani Mohun Roy and later expounded by Debendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen and other leading reformers of the late nineteenth century Bengal. [Alighieri] **Dante** (1265-1371): The famous Italian poet. His celebrated works include *Vita Nuova*, *Divina Commedia*, *Convito* and *De Monarchia*. [Francesco Petrarca] **Petrarch** (1304-74): Italian poet and scholar, one of the earliest and greatest of modern lyric poets and a great humanist of the Renaissance. His works include *Contemptu Mundi*, *De Otio Religiosorum* and *Canzoniere*. **Hafiz (Hafez)**, 1325-89): Pseudonym of **Shams ed- Din Muhammad**, the great lyrical poet, a Sufi philosopher and mystic of Persia. His *ghazals* are considered as the finest love songs in the Islamic world. **Devendra Nath Tagore (Debendranath)**, 1817-1905): Father of Rabindranath Tagore, known as *Maharshi* or a "Great Sage;" an active member of *Brahma Samaj*; associated with many social reforms in the nineteenth century Bengal, founded Santiniketan (an Abode of Peace) in 1886. His autobiography in English was published by Macmillan in 1914; other celebrated works in English are *Vedantic Doctrines Vindicated* and *Brahmo-Dharma*. **Lancelles Abercrombie** (1881-1938): An English man of letters; Professor of Literature at Leeds (1920) and London (1929), Reader at Oxford (1935). His works include *The Idea of Great Poetry* and *Romanticism*.

*The Daily News and Leader* (21 January, 1913)

**Rudyard Kipling** (1865-1936): English novelist, short-story writer and poet; born in India; spent early part of his career in India as a journalist; His celebrated works include *Kim*, *The Naulakha*, *The Seven Seas*, *Jungle Book* and *Stalky and Co*; awarded Nobel prize for literature in 1907. [Walter] **Bagehot** (1826-77): English economist and journalist; one time editor of *The Economist*. His *English Constitution* (1867) is still considered a standard work. **Marcus Aurelius Antonius** (121-180): A Roman Emperor and a nobleman. [Henri Frederic] **Amiel** (1821-81): Swiss writer, Professor at the University of Geneva. His best known writing was *Journal intime* (1883). [Walt] **Whitman** (1819-91): American poet and the editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*. Among his works *Leaves of Grass* and *Specimen Days and Collect* are well known. Whitman set himself the task in raising into the sphere of poetry the whole of modern life and man.

*The Spectator* (15 February, 1913)

[Sarojini] **Naidu** (1879-1949): Indian poet and feminist. Her verse displayed her mastery of the lyrical form in English and was translated into many Indian languages. Associated with Gandhi, she was the first Indian woman to be the President of the National Congress (1925). In 1947 she became the Governor of UP, India.

*The Globe* (1 April, 1913)

**Ernest [Percival] Rhys** (1859-1946): An Anglo-Welsh editor and poet. He is perhaps best known as the Editor of Everyman Library of Classics, first Western biographer of Tagore; other works include *A London Rose*, *Rhymes for Everyman* and *Song of the Sun*.

*The New Statesman* (19 April, 1913)

**"We read Mr. Tagore as we might have read Pacific, etc..."**: Refer to John Keats poem on "Looking at Chapman's Homer". [William] **Wordsworth** (1770-1850): One of the great romantic English poets

of nineteenth century and a good friend of his contemporary poet Coleridge. His works include *The Prelude* and *Lyrical Ballads*. He succeeded Southey as the poet laureate in 1843.

*The Globe* (10 May, 1913)

**21 Cromwell Road:** This building, now the Office of the French Consulate, is historically significant. Under the ownership of the India House this building was the hostel and the cultural centre of overseas students in Britain. It was also the office of Northbrook Society. Many eminent Indians stayed in this hostel while in England. **Chitra:** Tagore's own translation of Bengali lyrical drama *Chitrangada* based on a story of *Mahabharat*. The drama was first published by the India Society in 1914 and subsequently by Macmillan. This book was dedicated to Harriet Moody who was Tagore's host in Chicago (1913). [Edwin Samuel] **Montagu** (1879-1924): English politician and Liberal MP. He was parliamentary Under Secretary (1910-14) and Secretary of State for India (1917-22). As the head of delegation to the Indian provinces (1917-18) he collaborated with the Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford in the preparation of the Montague-Chelmsford report (1918) on the Indian constitutional reform.

*The Irish Times* (17/19 May, 1913)

**The Post-Office:** Translation of Tagore's Bengali drama *Dakghar* written in 1911; translated by Devabrata Mukherjee, an Oxford graduate. The English version and translations of this play of Tagore were staged around the world in different context. The play as a book was first published by Caula Press from Dublin in 1913 and subsequently by Macmillan in the same year. Recently the play has been freshly translated by Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson from America (1996) and William Radice from UK (The Tagore Centre, UK 1996). **Abbey Theatre:** Opened in Dublin in 1902 when the work of the Irish Literary Theatre, founded by Yeats and Lady Gregory was taken over by the Irish National Dramatic Society. It was officially opened in Dublin in 1904. The years 1907-9 were difficult time for the Abbey for mainly financial reason and the management of the theatre changed hands several times until the theatre was taken over by the playwright-director Lennox Robinson. **St. Enda's College:** At Rathfarnham (near Dublin) in Ireland, founded by P.H. Pearse in 1908 with its teaching based on Irish tradition and culture. **P[adric].H[enry].Pearse** (1879-1916): Irish writer and nationalist, leader of the Gaelic revival and editor of its journal, founded St. Enda's College near Dublin in 1908. He was an active member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). His life was ended in a firing squad after his revolt against British in 1916. The work and philosophy of Tagore and Pearse were similar in many respects; both were nationalist in their own ways; both were engaged in the revival of their own languages and both founded educational institutions to introduce their own tradition and culture. **Lennox** [Esmé Stuart] **Robinson** (1886-1958): Irish playwright and theatrical producer associated with Abbey Theatre, Dublin. His contribution to the Irish Theatre is invaluable.

*The Christian Commonwealth* (21 May, 1913)

**"...a young Indian gentleman who chanced to be present":** either Kalimohon Ghosh or Sukumar Roy. **"Tennyson and Shelley were the same to me...":** **Alfred Tennyson** (1809-92) - An English poet; celebrated works *In Memoriam*, *Idylls of the King*. **Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792-1822) an English romantic poet; celebrated works *The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, *Mont Blanc*, *Prometheus Unbound*. **"I stayed with the English people... Dickens and Thackeray and the poets":** Reference of Tagore living with Dr Scot's family in London. [Charles] **Dickens** (1812-70) - an English novelist and writer; his celebrated works include *Oliver Twist*, *Picwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Old Curiosity Shop*. [William Makepeace] **Thackeray** (1811-63) - English novelist born in Calcutta. It was his work in the *Punch* from 1842 onwards that attracted attention of British readers. Some of his famous titles: *Vanity Fair*, *Henry Esmond*, *The Virginians*. **Lord** [Charles] **Hardinge** (1858-1944): Viceroy of India from 1910-16; permanent under-secretary for foreign affairs, ambassador in Paris (1920-22). **"...when he went on to speak of a private circular... to withdraw their sons from his school":** During the nationalist movement, Tagore's School was

under police surveillance for a considerable length of time, as he had given asylum to some of the revolutionaries and political activists (according to the police record) namely Kalimohon Ghosh, Charuchandra Banerjee, Hiralal Sen and others. Tagore's early association with *Anushilan Samiti* was also the reason for such surveillance. The following confidential circular was issued by the Director of Public Instruction, East Bengal and Assam which was later published in 26 January edition (1912) of *Bengalee*.

It has come to my knowledge that an Institution as the Santiniketan or Brahmacharyasrama at Bolpur in the Birbhum district of Bengal, is a place altogether unsuitable for the education of the sons of Government servants. As I have information that some Government servants in this province have sent their children there, I think it is necessary to ask you to warn any well-disposed Government servant whom you may know or believe to have sons at this institution or to be about to send sons to it, to withdraw them or refrain from sending them as the case may be; any connection with this institution in question is likely to prejudice the future of the boys who remain pupils of it after the issue of the present warning.

Tagore himself was also a police suspect as a political activist. "In my country I am a suspect no. 12, class B" – he once said to his biographer Krishna Kripalani. **Lord Carmichael** (1859-1923): Governor of Bengal; first Governor to visit Tagore's school in 1915. "**My eldest brother used to edit a magazine,...**": Tagore's eldest brother, **Dwijendranath Tagore** (1840-1926), was a philosopher and writer. His celebrated works include *Sapnaprayan* and translation of *Meghdutam* of Kalidasa. Under his editorship a monthly literary magazine ***Bharati*** was first published from Tagore Estate in 1877. Tagore's early writings were regularly published in *Bharati*. He himself was the editor of this magazine for some time then the editorship was taken over by his sister Swarnakumari Devi. ***Upanishads and Sufi mystics***: ***Upanishads*** are ancient Hindu sacred literature derived from *Vedas*, dated back as early as 400 BC. The special concern of the *Upanishads* is with the nature of reality. There is a development toward the concept of a single, supreme being and knowledge is directed towards a reunion with it. There are several sections, *Chandogya Upanishad*, *Kathopanishad* and so on. In early 19th-century *Upanishads* were translated in Europe and it had a profound effect on several thinkers namely Schopenhauer. ***Sufi mystics***: Sufi mysticism refers to that aspect of Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. During the Muslim period Sufis in India were brought closer to Hindu mysticism by an emphasis on the divine unity which became almost monism – a religio-philosophic perspective according to which there is one basic reality, and the distinction between God and the World (and man) tend to disappear.

*The Westminster Gazette* (21 May, 1913)

**Kalidas** (396-450?): India's legendary poet and playwright whose writings enriched the classical Sanskrit literature. His celebrated works include *Meghdutam*, *Sakuntala* and *Kumar Sambhabam*. **K[edar] N[ath] Dasgupta** (1878-1942): Inspired by the ideology of Swami Vivekananda, Dasgupta was very much involved in the political movement especially against the Partition of Bengal in early part of twentieth century; he inspired Tagore to edit the monthly journal *Bhander*; founder of Indian Art, Dramatic and Friendly Society and later on The Union of East and West Club in London. **Bankim Chandra** [Chatterjee] (1838-1894): India's most distinguished novelist and a prolific prose-writer of nineteenth century whose enormous contribution in enriching Bengali language and literature is well recognized. His novels include *Anandamath*, *Kapalkundala*, *Durgeshnandini*, *Radharani*, a satire *Kamalanakanter Daptar* and many other, some of which have been translated in English. Tagore's formative years were very much influenced by Chatterjee.

*The Inquirer* (24 May, 1913)

***The Search for God***: This was the title of the series of philosophical lectures delivered by Tagore under the auspice of the Quest Society in London. The initial agreement was for five lectures, one per week (usually on Mondays), to be delivered at Caxton Hall, SW1 between May 19 and June 17, 1913. The titles of the lectures were *Realisation of the Individual and the Universe* (19 May), *Soul-Consciousness* (26 May), *Problem of Evil* (2 June), *Problem of Self* (9 June) and *Realisation of Love* (16 June). However, due to the growing public

interest the sixth lecture on *Realisation of Brahma* was arranged on 25 June at Kensington Town Hall. Tickets were 10s. for the entire session. Later on these lectures were published by Macmillan as *Sadhana- Realisation of Self* in 1913. **The Quest Society**: A Society of Philosophical studies founded in the early part of the 20th century. The Society regularly published its monthly journal *The Quest* under the editorship of G.S.Mead who was also a friend of Tagore. Incidentally, Sukumar Roy (a versatile children's writer of India) wrote an article - *The spirit of Rabindranath Tagore*- published in *The Quest* (Vol.V, October, 1913) which was one of the earliest writings on Tagore in a British journal.

*The Christian Commonwealth* (28 May, 1913)

"...of Prof. Royce's highest expressions... of Bosanquet's plea for "greater self": [Josiah] **Royce** (1855-1916) – American philosopher and professor of Harvard University from 1892. His works include - *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy, Essays upon Problems of Philosophy and of Life*. [Bernard] **Bosanquet** (1848-1923) – an English idealist philosopher; lecturer in Oxford who later became a professor at St. Andrews. His best works are *Implication and Linear Influence* and *Three Lectures on Aesthetic*. Both Royce and Bosanquet were influenced by Hegelian philosophy.

*The Times* (16 June, 1913)

[Gopal Krishna] **Gokhale** (1866-1915): Indian political leader; an active member of Indian National Congress who became its President. He strongly opposed untouchability and also took up the cause of impoverished Indians living in South Africa. **Sir Sankaran** [Chettur] **Nair** (1857-1934): Indian statesman and jurist; opposed the Indian national movement led by Gandhi. [Sir Mirza] **Abbas Ali Baig** (1859-1932): Distinguished Indian Lawyer, Chief Minister of Junagadh, Vice-President, Council of India. **P. L. Roy**: An Indian drama enthusiast who, with the co-operation of the Countess of Minto organised the play *Kumar Sambharam* in London in 1912. [Muhammad Ali] **Jinnah** (1876-1948): Muslim politician of undivided India and the founder of Muslim League. He was the main force behind the foundation of Pakistan in 1947 and later on became its Prime Minister. [Aneurin] **Bevan** (1897-1960): A British politician belonging to the left wing of the Labour party; appointed Minister for Health in the Labour Government in 1945 and in 1948 introduced the revolutionary National Health Service. **J. M. Mehta**: A resident physician of London Hospital at the East End.

*The Globe* (11 July, 1913)

[Count Maurice] **Maeterlinck** (1862-1949): Belgian dramatist; awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1911. Celebrated works include *La Princesse Malene, Mary Magdalene* and *La Vie des abeilles*. [Hermann] **Sudermann** (1857-1928): German dramatist and novelist. His works include *Die Ehre, Sodoms Ende* and *Hennele*. [John] M[illington] **Synge** (1871-1909): Irish playwright and at one time Director of Abbey Theatre. He spent several years in Paris. His famous dramas are *In the Shadow of the Glen, Riders to the Sea, The Well of Saints* and *Playboy of the Western World*.

*The Nation* (13 September, 1913)

**The Gardener**: This was the second book of verse of Tagore published by Macmillan in September, 1913. The book includes a collection of 85 poems translated from the original by the poet himself. Of these 85 poems 26 are taken from his Bengali title *Kanika*, 13 from *Chitra* (different from his drama *Chitra*), 8 from *Sonar Tori*, 6 from *Kheya*, 6 from *Utsarga*, 6 from *Chaitali*, 4 from *Kori o Komal*, 3 from *Manashi*, 3 from his opera *Mayar Khela* and 5 from his book of songs *Gitanitan*. The book also includes a single sketch of Tagore drawn by his nephew Gaganendranath Tagore. The book was dedicated to W. B. Yeats. **The Crescent Moon**: A children's book of verse, translated by Tagore and was published by Macmillan in November, 1913. Most of the poems of *the Crescent Moon* are taken from his Bengali books *Sishu* and *Kori o Komal*. The book also includes 8 colour paintings: Nandalal Bose (3), Asit Halder (2), Surendranath Ganguli (2) and Abanindranath Tagore (1); cover designed by Sturge Moore to whom the book is dedicated. "... *Irish*

**mystic, "A.E."...**: pseudonym of **George William** (1867-1935), an Irish poet, writer and economist and a recognized figure in the Irish literary renaissance. His works include *The Candle of Vision*, *The Divine Vision*, *Midsummer Eve* and a play *Deldre*.

*The Spectator* (13 September, 1913)

**Glimpses of Bengal Life**: The first collection of short stories of Tagore published in the West, translated by Rajani Ranjan Sen. The volume includes thirteen stories of Tagore. These are, - *The Fruit-Seller*, *The School Closes*, *A Resolve Accomplished*, *The Dumb Girl*, *The Wandering Guest*, *The Look Auspicious*, *A Study in Anatomy*, *The Landing Stairway*, *The Sentence*, *The Expiation*, *The Golden Mirage*, *The Trespass* and *The Hungry Stone*. Tagore himself found these translations were inadequate. "**Mr Sen compares ... Guy de Maupassant and Chateaubriand**": **Guy de Maupassant** (1850-93) - a French novelist and short story writer. His famous writings include *La Maison Tellier*, *La Horla*, *La Peur*, *Une Vie* and *Bel Ami*. [Francois Rene] **Chateaubriand** (1768-1848) - French writer and politician. His celebrated works include *Essai sur les Revolutions*, *Atala*, *Genie du Christianisme* and *Memories d'outre-tombe*. "**... style of R.L.Stevenson ...**": **R[obert] L[ouis] [Balfour] Stevenson** (1850-94) - Scottish author whose writings endears him to young and old alike. His famous works include *The New Arabian Nights*, *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Black Arrow* and his recollection of childhood in verse - *A Child's Garden of Verses*.

*Pall Mall Gazette* (14 October, 1913)

**"Riddle" almost requires a footnote, ...**: The Tagore scholar Sourendramohan Mitra while comparing the range of Yeats revision in the manuscript of *The Gardener* with its published version found that the word "Riddle" was not in the original manuscript. Tagore's original sentence was - *If your feet are pale with dew, if your anklets slacken, if pearls drop out of your chain, do not mind* which was subsequently changed by Yeats into - *If the riddle comes from your feet because of the dew...etc.* (*The Gardener*, poem no. 11). Hence this particular instance of "Crudities" is not the fault of the "self-translator" as mentioned by the critic of the *Gazette*. See page 59 of *Khayati Akhyater Nepatheye* (Behind the fame and defame) by Mitra, published by Ananda Publishers 1977 from Calcutta. [Frederick] **Locker-Lampson** (1821-95): English writer whose *London Lyrics* revealed him as a writer of merit.

*The Daily News and Leader* (27 October, 1913)

**"... enthusiasm of Max Muller..."**: [Friedrich] **Max Muller** (1823-1900) - Born in Germany and later became a naturalised British. Max Muller was a renowned philologist and orientalist. He translated *Rig-Veda* into English, at one time a professor of Modern Language in Oxford. His celebrated works - *Lectures on the Science of Language*, *Auld Lang Syne* and *The Sacred Books of the East*. "**...perfection which Europe attained in Dante...Michael Angelo**": [Geoffrey] **Chaucer** (1345-1400) - a fourteenth century English poet of distinction. His celebrated works include - *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Legend of Good Women* and *The Canterbury Tales*. [Johann Wolfgang von] **Goethe** (1749-1832) - German poet and dramatist, scientist and court official. His famous works include the plays namely *Die Laune des Verliebten*, *Die Mitschuldigen*, *Sturm und Drang*, *Iphigenie*, *Egmont* and the masterpiece *Faust* and the favourite German literary composition is *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjare*. Goethe had a towering influence in German literature. [Miguel de] **Cervantes** [Saavedra] (1547-1616) - Spanish author; celebrated work *Don Quixote* which ranks him as one of the great writers of the world; but his short novels also are best of their kind. **Rembrandt** [Harmensz van Rijn] (1606-69) - Dutch painter; his famous paintings include *Christ presented in the Temple*, *Philosopher*, *Supper at Emmaus* and his masterpiece - *Night Watchman*. **Michael Angelo** (Michelagnuolo di Lodovico Buonarroti, 1475-1564) - Italian sculptor, painter and poet, - brilliant representative of the Italian Renaissance. He was not only an extraordinary genius in the arts of sculpture and painting but was also a poet and architect. Celebrated works - *Cupid*, *Madonna*, *the Holy Family of the Tribune* *Cupid*, and *the Last Judgement*. [John] **Keats** (1795-1821) - English romantic poet; his celebrated works include - *Endymion* and *Lamia and Other Poems*: [Algeron Charles] **Swinburne** (1837-1909) - English poet, playwright and critic. He was largely influenced

by Victor Hugo while he was a student in France and later on by Rossetti in England. His famous works include *Atlantis in Calydon*, *Poems and Ballads*, *Songs before Sunrise*, *Chasteland* and *Tristram of Lyonesse*. **Mahabharata**: One of the two epics of India, originally written in Sanskrit is highly valued for their literary merits and religious inspiration; written by Vyasdev; an important source of knowledge of Hinduism as it evolved during the period 400BC - 200AD. [Paul] **Verlaine** (1844-96) – French poet and a consummate master of a lyric form. His works include - *Fetes galantes*, *La Bonne Chanson*, *Sagesse* and *Elegies*. “... **Sappho and Catullus’s rendering of Sappho**”- **Sappho** (c. 650BC) Greek poetess of antiquity, wrote lyrics unsurpassed for depth of feeling, passion and grace. [Gaius Valerius] **Catullus** (84-54BC) – Greatest lyric poet of ancient Italy. His extant works comprise 116 pieces and in this slender body of poetry, there are love poems, verses on social topics, satiric poems and descriptive and mythological pieces some of which were adapted from Sappho and other Greek works. [Theophile] **Gautier** (1811-72) - French poet and novelist; from painting turned to literature and became an extreme ‘romanticist’. Celebrated works - *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, *Les Jeunes-France*, *Eumaux et cames* and *La Belle Jenny*. [John] **Milton** (1608-74) - Great English poet of seventeenth century. Celebrated works include, *Arcopagitica*, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. **W[illiam] H[enry]**. **Davies** (1871-1940) – British poet. His works include *A Soul’s Destroyer*, *Autobiography of a Super-tramp*, *Poet’s Calendar* and *My Garden*.

*The Observer* (2 November, 1913)

**Yonejiro Noguchi** (1875-1947) : Japanese poet wrote mostly in English. Tagore and Noguchi were good friends at one time. However during the war Tagore was very much disenchanted with him. Later on when Noguchi asked for Tagore’s approbation of Japan’s motives as the builder of a new powerful Asia (by massacring the Chinese and Manchurians!) Tagore wrote to Noguchi in 1938 in a sharp tone, “Your letter has hurt me to the depths of my being, and tore to pieces your conception of an Asia raised on a tower of skulls.” (Majumder, *South Asia Forum Quarterly*, p12-15, Vol 10: 1997). Noguchi visited Santiniketan in November, 1935 and contributed articles in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*.

*The Daily Chronicle* (14 November, 1913)

**Dwarkanath Tagore** (1794-1846): was the founder of the famous Tagore family of Jorasanko in Calcutta. In his time he was a business tycoon with interests in shipping, coal, banking and many other. He supported the liberal movements of the day and was one of the earliest supporters of the Brahma Samaj founded by Raja Rammohan Roy (q.v.). Rabindranath was a grandson of Dwarkanath Tagore. “**One of his daughters conducts the “Bharati” magazine**”: Reference of **Swarnakumari Devi** (1865-1932), Tagore’s sister who was also the first woman novelist in Bengal. She took the editorship of *Bharati* following Tagore, who had succeeded its founder editor Dwijendranath Tagore, Tagore’s eldest brother.

*The Westminster Gazette* (19 December, 1913)

“**Mr. A ... always addresses us, and Mr. P...**”: Reference of Andrews and Pearson respectively **Conrad of Elsass**: Pseudonym of Edward Thompson.

*The Times Educational Supplement* (4 January, 1914)

“**Sir Thomas Beecham has educated both himself and his public ...**”: **Sir Thomas Beecham** (1879-1961) was a British conductor and producer of opera. He was the principal conductor and subsequently the artistic director of Covent Garden; joined as a conductor of the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

*The Manchester Guardian* (6 January, 1914)

“... **such thinkers as Emerson or more recently, Edward Caird.**”: [Ralph Waldo] **Emerson** (1803-82) – American poet and essayist A plea for the individual consciousness as against all traditional creeds, bibles, churches, for the soul of each man as the supreme judge in spiritual matters was the keynote

of Emerson's philosophical teachings. **Edward Caird** (1835-1908) - Scottish idealist philosopher best known for his monumental commentary *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*

*The Daily Chronicle* (12 January, 1914)

**J[ames] Ramsay Macdonald** (1866-1937): British politician. He was Prime Minister of the first Labour Government in Britain; visited Tagore's school at Santiniketan in 1913. **Arya Samaj**: A reform sect of modern Hinduism founded by Dayananda Swarasati. **Santiniketan**: The name of the settlement founded by Tagore's father at Bolpur, an arid place, hundred miles north of Calcutta, for recluse and meditation. Tagore started his experimental residential school in Santiniketan in 1901 based on the model of forest schools in ancient India with a greater emphasis on the spiritual development of pupils as opposed to the job-centric education which was in vogue. The school started with five students (including his son) and two teachers; subsequently developed and expanded into an open-air school. The school became co-educational in 1918 which was a daunting experiment at that time. Tagore put his Nobel prize money and also royalty of his books to build up resources of the school. The school was further expanded as the Visva-Bharati University in 1921. **Abanindranath** [Tagore] (1871-1951): Tagore's nephew and a great painter whose paintings were largely influenced by Mughal and Rajput schools. Principal of Calcutta School of Art who later became the vice-president of India Society, London.

*The New Statesman* (17 January, 1914)

**Sister Nivedita: Ananda K[entish]. Coomaraswamy** [1877-1960]. Ceylonese art critic; one time Director of Mineral Survey of Ceylon (Sri Lanka); Fellow of Indian, Persian and Islamic art in Boston Museum of Fine Arts; an active member of India Society and a close friend of Tagore, translated some of Tagore's work. **Sadhana: Realisation of Life**: Collection of essays based on lectures delivered by Tagore under the series *Search for God* in the previous year under auspice of the Quest Society. Some of these lectures were also delivered in USA. The collection was published by Macmillan in November, 1913. **Ramayana**: One of the two epics of India written in Sanskrit by the poet Valmiki around 300BC.. **Buddha** (563-483BC): Real name was Siddhartha Gautama; born near Nepal in the family of a Sakya king. At the age of thirty he left the life of luxuries for the life of an ascetic and after years of penance he saw in the contemplative life the perfect enlightenment or *Bodhi* (hence the name Buddha). The keynote of the teaching of Buddha or Buddhism is directed towards the emancipation of soul or *Nirvana*. [Samuel] **Johnson** (1709-84): English lexicographer, critic and poet. Celebrated works include *Journey to the Western Isles*, *Vanity of Human Wishes* and *Rasselas*.

*The Westminster Gazette* (7 February, 1914)

**Walter De La Mare** (1873-1956): English poet and novelist. His works include children's story *The Three Mulla Mulgars* and volumes of poetry *The Listeners*, *Peacock Pie* and *The Veil*.

*The Baptist Times and Freeman* (13 February, 1914)

**Rupert [Chawner] Brooke** (1887-1915): English poet; his poems are characterized by a youthful and gentle lyricism. His works include *Poems and Other poems* [Alphonse] **Daudet** (1840-97): French writer, his celebrated works - *Letters do mon moulin*, *Robert Helmont*, *Tartarin de Tarascon*.

*The Friend* (13 February, 1914)

[William Ernest] **Henley** (1849-1903): English poet, playwright, critic and editor; his works of poetry include *A Book of Verses*, *The Song of Sword*, *Hawthorn and Lavender* and of the three plays *Deacon Brodie* is outstanding. [Swami] **Vivekananda** (1863-1902): Original name Narendranath Datta, Hindu spiritual leader and reformer in India, an active force in Vedantic movement in the late nineteenth century India. [Charles] **Darwin** (1809-1882): An English biologist famous for his theory of *Origin of Species through Natural Selection*. The book was published on 24 November, 1859 and the first edition of the book was sold out on

the day of publication. It was subsequently reprinted a number of times during its author's life and translated into many languages. The seminal book is still in print.

*The Spectator* (14 February, 1914)

**"As a recent French Historian puts it..."(?)**. [Thomas Babington] **Macaulay** (1800-1859): British lawyer, author and historian; law Member of Council of India (1834-8); famous for his strong views about India, Indians and his vision of British rule in that country; Lord Macaulay wanted to create a class of Indians who would be 'Indian in colour and blood, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.' **"...E.B. Cowell translated the Chandi of Mukunda Ram ... Bengali Crabbe[sic]"**: **Edward Byles Cowell** (1826-1903) An English Sanskrit scholar, Head of History, Presidency College, Calcutta, Principal, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, later on became the professor of Sanskrit, Cambridge University **Mukunda Ram**: Bengali poet who lived in the latter part of the 16th century. His celebrated work was the famous *Chandimangal Kavya*. [George] **Crabbe** (1754-1832): An English poet; his works include, *The Parish Register*, *The Borough* and *Tales of the Hall*. Crabbe's writing suited all tastes because of his veracity and his masterly depiction of humble middle class life. [Raja] **Ram Mohan Roy** (1774-1833): Indian religious and social reformer and scholar; published his works in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit with the aim of uprooting idolatry and helped in the abolition of *suttee*. He issued an English abridgement of *Vedanta*; founder of *Brahmo-Samaj* in 1828; died in England. [Henry Thomas] **Colebrooke** (1765-1837): An English orientalist; became an officer in India; studied Sanskrit and other Asian languages. He wrote *Sanskrit Grammar*.

*The Times* (18 February, 1914)

**Lord** [William Ewart] **Gladstone** (1809-98): British statesman and orator, Liberal Prime Minister of Britain at the reign of Queen Victoria. His various essays in literary and political, in ecclesiastical and theological criticism, constitute a life's work in themselves.

*The Daily Citizen* (17 April, 1914)

**Bhagavad Gita**: Religious and philosophical instructions in verse form included as an episode in the sixth book of *Mahabharat*.

*The Catholic Herald* (30 May, 1914)

**"...the mood of old Khayyam...prop through life."**: **Omar Khayyam** (1050-1123) was a Persian poet and astronomer whose verses or quatrains are incorporated in his well known works *Rubayat*. Omar was a poet of Agnosticism, though some critics think there is nothing more than wine-cups and roses in his poems. Edward FitzGerald was the first Westerner to translate seventy five verses of *Rubayat* which was published in 1859.

*The Observer* (14 June, 1914)

**The King of the Dark Chamber**: This was the third drama of Tagore published from Macmillan in June, 1914. The play is translation of his Bengali play *Raja*. There was a publishers' folly behind the publication of this drama. Tagore commissioned Khitish Sen, a Cambridge graduate to translate this play. Assuming the book will be published in the winter of 1914, Tagore was going through Sen's draft in Santiniketan at a leisurely space when to his surprise the printed book came to his hand. Macmillan, instead of waiting for author's approval, printed the draft manuscript, a copy of which was in the possession of Rothenstein. Even Sen's name was not acknowledged in the book. This incident resulted some bitterness between Sen and Tagore. Tagore being utterly disappointed and disgusted with this unprofessionalism from the part of his publisher wrote letters to Rothenstein and Rhys.. For Tagore-Rothenstein letter see page 170 of *Imperfect Encounter* by M. Lago, Tagore-Rhys correspondence published in the Bengali magazine *Desh* ( 12 December, 1992, pp17 ).

*The Times Literary Supplement* (16 March, 1916)

**Ramananda Chatterjee** (1865-1943): Editor of two leading monthly journals, *Probashi* (in Bengali) and *The Modern Review* (in English) in India; a close friend of Tagore. **Rev. C[harles]. F[rier]. Andrews** (1871-1940): Trained as missionary, came to India as a teacher and involved himself in social and humanitarian work. He was a close friend of Tagore and Gandhi. His life and writings are testimony to his profound Christian faith.

*The Times Educational Supplement* (2 May, 1916)

**"Closing of Presidency College..."**: Presidency College is one of the outstanding, century-old academic institutions in Calcutta. In March, 1916 a disturbing incident took place in the College when a group of students led by Subhas Chandra Bose assaulted an English teacher, E. F. Oaten, for his provocative remarks. As a result of this incident the College was closed for a time. Considering the seriousness of the situation Tagore wrote this letter to the then Chancellor of Calcutta University, Lord Carmichael, seeking a solution of the crisis.

*The Daily Express* (8 November, 1916)

**Fruit-gathering**: The fourth book of English verse of Tagore published by Macmillan in October, 1916. The book includes eighty-six poems of which sixteen poems each are taken from his Bengali works *Gitanjali* and *Gitali*, fifteen poems are taken from *Balaka* and the rest of the poems are taken from *Katha o Kahini* (9), *Utsarga* (6), *Smaran* (5), *Kori o Komol* (1), *Khanika* (1) and *Smaran* (1). The book was dedicated to (?) The mood of these poems are like those in *Gitanjali*. **Hungry Stones and Other Stories**: A collection of thirteen short stories taken from his Bengali original *Galpaguchha*, translated by various writers namely, Pannalal Bose (*The Hungry Stones*), Prabhat Mukherjee (*We Crown the King and Renunciation*), Sister Nivedita (*The Cabulwallah*), Tagore (*The Victory*), Thompson (*Living or Dead*) and the remaining seven stories (*Once there was a King*, *The Home-coming*, *My Lord – the Baby*, *The Kingdom of Cards*, *The Devotee*, *Vision* and *Babus of Nayanjore*, by Andrews.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (23 November, 1916)

**Father John Tabb** (1835-1895): English poet; real name **John Byron Tabley**, also wrote novels and plays under different pseudonyms. **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** (1828-82): English poet and painter. In both paintings and poetry his development was from religious simplicity to a more complex and ornate fashion. Some of his famous paintings are *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (1849) and *The Annunciation* (1850). His celebrated writings are *Ballads and Sonnets* (1881), *The House of Life* and so on. **George Meredith** (1828-1909): English novelist. His well-known works include *Beauchamp's Career*, *The Egoist*, *The Amazing Marriage* and *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*.

*The Inquirer* (9 December, 1916)

**Sir William Watson** (1858-1935): English poet; his well-known works include *Wordsworth Grove* (1890), *Odes and Other Poems* (1894), *Heralds of the Dawn* (1912). He was knighted in 1917. **"Like Tolstoy's short stories ..."**: [Count Nikolayevich] **Tolstoy** (1828-1909) was a Russian writer, philosopher, moralist and mystic. His classics are *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *A Confession*, and *Resurrection*. He was one of the great short story writers of his time. Gandhi, who had corresponded with him, was influenced by his doctrine of passive resistance.

*The Nation* (23 December, 1916)

**"Fergusson's monumental books on Indian architecture..."**: **James Fergusson** (1808-86) was a Scottish art historian who minutely studied Indian rock temples. His celebrated work *History of Architecture*.

*The Times (2 January, 1917)*

**Sir R. Tagore in Japan:** In 1916 Tagore accepted a lecturing assignment in USA arranged by Pond Leyceum Bureau. On his way to America he visited Japan. He was looking forward to this tour as his love for Japan was expressed in many of his early letters and writings. "I want to know Japan in the outward manifestation of its modern life in the spirit of its traditional past. I also want to follow the traces of ancient India in your civilisation and to have some ideas of your literature" – he once wrote to Kimura, then a visiting scholar attached to Calcutta University (later his interpreter in Japan tour). When he reached Kobe, the World War was in its second year. During that time Japan was engaged in occupying China. He was totally disarrayed and dismayed to see Japan, following footsteps of the West, was engaged in an act of aggressions against China and also the Japanese people were blindly copying the Western culture ignoring their great heritage. His open criticism offended the Japanese people and the press.

*The Daily Express (7 February, 1917)*

**Stray Birds:** During his tour in Japan in 1916, Tagore at the request of his admirers used to write short poems and epigrams in their note-books, handkerchiefs or on hand-fans. Some of these short verses were translations of his epigrammatic Bengali poems already published in *Kanika*. However most of the poems were extempore, written first in English and later on translated into Bengali. and some had never been translated into Bengali. A collection of 326 of these aphorisms were included in *Stray Birds*, first published by Macmillan, New York in December 1916 and subsequently from London. The book was dedicated to his Japanese host Hara San. The coloured drawing in the frontispiece was contributed by Willy Pogany. One can find a distinct influence of Japanese Haiku in these poems as suggested by Kripalini – one of Tagore's biographers.

*The Birmingham Daily Post (14 February, 1917)*

**Elijah on Mount Horab:** Old Testament figure; Greek Elias (900 B.C.); greatest of the prophets of Israel, lived during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah. "... *such critics as Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse.*": **Arthur Symons** (1865-1945): British poet and critic. He had familiarized the British with the literature of France and Italy by translating d'Annunzio and Baudelaire. He also wrote *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* and *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*. **Sir Edmund William Gosse** (1845-1928), English poet and critic; librarian to the House of Lords. He first introduced Ibsen to English readers.

*Camberwell Borough Advertiser (24 February, 1917)*

**Song of Solomon: Solomon** (1015-977 B.C.) was the King of Israel; second son of David and Bathsheba. Solomon was credited with transcendental wisdom. [Henrich] **Heine** (1797-1865): German poet and essayist. His *Das Buch der Lieder* published in 1827 created excitement throughout Germany. His other works are *Gedichte*, *Reisebilder* and *Atta Troll*. Nearly all his writings are lyrical, autobiographical and journalistic in nature. **Fiona Macleod** (1855-1905): Pseudonym of the Scottish writer **William Sharp**. He wrote books on contemporary English, French, German poets; but is chiefly remembered as the author of the remarkable series of Celtic- or Neo-Celtic tales and romances by 'Fiona Macleod.' **Novalis**: The pseudonym of the German romantic poet **Friedrich von Hardenberg** (1772-1801). His celebrated work: *Hymnen an die Nacht*.

*The Times Literary Supplement (1 March, 1917)*

**The Cycle of Spring:** Translation of Tagore's musical *Phalguni*. The book was dedicated to his boys in Santiniketan and also Dinendranath Tagore. **Dinendranath Tagore** (1882-1935): Tagore's nephew who tried to save all musical compositions of Tagore through writing notations and therefore regarded as the custodian of Tagore's music.

*Everyman (20 April, 1917)*

**Shantiniketan**: This book, written by Pearson, is a graphic account of early days of Tagore's settlement in Santiniketan. The book was published by Macmillan in April, 1917. [Aaron] **Arrowsmith** (1750-1823): an English cartographer. [Maria] **Montessori** (1870-1952): Italian physician and educationalist; developed a system of education for children of three to six based on spontaneity and freedom from restraint. The Montessori Method of education is still very popular throughout the world. "**the Caldecott Community**": named after **Randolph Caldecott** (1846-86), an English artist and book illustrator who made a substantial contribution to *Punch and Graphic* and illustrated many books for children. **Homer Lane**... **W[illiam] W[instanley] Pearson** (1881-1924): English social reformer and missionary, came to Santiniketan as a teacher in 1912. He worked for the cause of indentured Indian labourers in South Africa along with Gandhi and Andrews; translated some poems of Tagore and the entire novel - *Gora*.

*Sheffield Daily Telegraph (30 April, 1917)*

"... **the old term "Masque" would apply more accurately...**": Masque is a form of dramatic writing and performance featuring poetry, music and dance, popular in 17th-century England. However the masque declined rapidly in England but survived on some countries in the continent.

*The New Witness (31 May, 1917)*

[Martin Farquhar] **Tupper** (1810-89): English writer, his name is chiefly connected with a long series of moralising in free verse or rhythematics collected in his *Proverbial Philosophy*.

*The Times Literary Supplement (31 May, 1917)*

**Personality**: This is the third book of philosophical essays of Tagore published by Macmillan in May 1917. The collection of six essays - *What is Art?*, *The World of Personality*, *The Second Birth*, *My School*, *Meditation* and *Woman* - were basically the lectures delivered by Tagore in USA, between September 1916 to January, 1917. This lecture series was sponsored by Pond Lyceum of Lyceum Bureau. The first edition includes some photographs of Tagore as a tourist in America. "... **motherhood has been, is here handled in Botticelli's manner rather than in Murillo's...**": [Sandro] **Botticelli** (1444-1510) was a Florentine painter. His numerous paintings are marked by much imaginative refinement. Among his works *Birth of Venus*, *Primavera*, *Madonna and child*, *Coronation of the Virgin* are famous examples. [Bartolome Esteban] **Murillo** (1618-82) was a Spanish painter. In 1645 he painted eleven remarkable pictures for the convent of San Francisco. During 1661-74, his most brilliant period, he painted eight masterpieces including *Conception*. "...**Kingsley's advice...**": [Charles] **Kingsley** (1819-75) was an English author who wrote some brilliant social novels which had enormous influence at the time. He was very active working various schemes for the improvement of morals of the working classes.

*The Morning Post (20 July, 1917)*

**My Reminiscences**: This is the English version of *Jibansmriti*, - Tagore's autobiography, translated by Surendranath Tagore, his nephew. The book was published by Macmillan in 1917.

*The Manchester Guardian (21 July, 1917)*

**Plato** (472-347 BC): Greek philosopher genius of all times. A disciple of Socrates; he developed his own thoughts and ideas. In 388 BC Plato founded his own school in Athens where mathematical and political studies were conducted. *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Charmides* are some of his well known dialogues. [George] **Berkeley** (1685-1753): Anglican philosopher and Bishop. His works include *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, *Treatise and Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. **Sir Lawrence Binyon** (1869-1943): English poet and art critic. He was in charge of Oriental prints and paintings in British Museum from 1913-33; one time Professor of Poetry at Harvard. His famous studies include *Paintings in the Far East*, *Japanese Art and Drawings and Engravings of William Blake*.

*The Inquirer* (26 July, 1917)

**C[harles] G[eorge] D[ouglas] Roberts** (1863-1943): Canadian writer, poet and naturalist, later settled in New York. *The Feet of the Future* and *Eyes of the Wilderness* are two of his excellent nature studies.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (9 August, 1917)

**"One may remember Mrs Meynell's paradox ..."**: [Alice Christiana Gertrude] **Meynell** (1847-1922): English essayist and poet. Her writings include *The Rhythm of Life*, *The Colour of Life*, *Hearts of Controversy*. She also had edited several journals with her husband Wilfrid Meynell. **Keshab Chandra Sen** (1838-84): Indian social reformer and a progressive force within the Brahmo-samaj. He was the founder editor of the daily newspaper – *India Mirror*.

*The Birmingham Daily Post* (15 August, 1917)

**Toru Dutta** (1856-77): Indian author and a converted Christian; spent her days in England and France, translated portions of the *Vishnupuran* into English. Her other works include *Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* and *Le Journal de Mdile d'Arrers*.

*The Yorkshire Post* (15 August, 1917)

**William James** (1842-1910): An American psychologist and pragmatic philosopher. His important works are *Principles of Psychology*, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and *The Will to Believe*.

*The Birmingham Daily Post* (21 August, 1917)

**"Ruskin's creed..."**: **John Ruskin** (1819-1900); an English author and art critic, author of *Modern Painters*. Based on his singular work Oxford made him the first Slade Professor of Fine Arts in 1870. However, in later years his interest shifted from art to social questions and his resentment against social injustice and squalor resulting from unbridled capitalism led him to a sort of Christian Communism for which he was denigrated. He began to invest his fortune in such individual enterprises as the St George's Guild, the John Ruskin School at Camberwell, and the Whitelands College at Chelsea.

*The Nation* (25 August, 1917)

**Peter Parley** (1793-1860): Pseudonym of **Samuel Griswold Goodrich**; an American publisher who published some two hundred volumes, mostly for the young.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (13 September, 1917)

**Nationalism**: When Tagore visited Japan and USA in 1916 the first world war was continuing in its second year. During that tour Tagore was bitterly disappointed and frustrated observing the unbounded greed for material wealth of Japan and big Western nations. In USA he had lectured twenty times on *Nationalism* and *Cult of Nationalism* from the East to the West coast of the country. Later on these lectures were edited and published in the book *Nationalism* in three sections – *Nationalism in the West*, *Nationalism in Japan* and *Nationalism in India* and there was a poem *The sunset of the century* at the end. These lectures were separate from his lectures of assignment which had already been published in *Personality*. Tagore wanted to dedicate this book to the American President Woodrow Wilson but the White House did not give any permission to Macmillan as 'Tagore was believed to be involved in the anti-British plots that were being hatched in America by Indian revolutionaries' (Sujit Mukherjee, *Passage to America*, Bookland, Calcutta, p80). The book was finally dedicated to C. F. Andrews. Tagore's western image as a mystic poet and seer from the East was first seriously dented with the publication of this book. 'His lectures on Nationalism,' wrote Kripalani, 'were ill-timed' when the whole Europe was at war. This book was also in Lenin's collection. **Romain Rolland** (1866-1944): French author. During the first World War he aroused unpopularity by showing a pacifist attitude in his writings and left France to live in Switzerland. His celebrated novel *Jean Christophe* in ten volumes was highly praised and he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1915.

His other works include biographies of Michelangelo, Tolstoy, Gandhi and Handel. On his return to France he became a mouthpiece of the opposition to Fascism and Nazism. **Bertrand** [Arthur William] **Russell** (1872-1958): English philosopher, mathematician and one of the greatest logicians of all times. He was awarded Nobel prize for literature in 1950. His celebrated works are - *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, *The Analysis of Mind*, *An enquiry into Meaning and Truth*. **Sir James Stephens** (1882-1950): Irish Poet; his works include *Insurrections*, *The Demi-gods* and *Deirdre*.

*The Manchester Guardian* (2 January, 1918)

**The National Congress:** Founded in December 1885 the Indian National Congress developed as the most effective and unique political body in India. Since the first World War, under the leadership of Gandhi it became a mass-based organisation. The INC's Quit India movement of 1942 eventually led to India winning the freedom struggle in 1947. The first fifty years of independence was also dominated by the Party which held the power at Centre most of these years. **Mrs.** [Annie] **Besant** (1847-1933): was a half-Irish woman of boundless energy, wide interests and powerful-oratory. After many years of Social work in England she came to India in 1893 and engaged herself in social and political movement in the country. She became president of the Indian National Congress in 1917 and was founder of the Indian Boys Scouts' Association and a National University in Adiyar, near Madras. **Mr.** [Bal Gangadhar] **Tilak** (1856-1920): Political leader, social reformer, educationist and journalist in India, one of the founders of Indian National Congress. **Mr. Surendranath Banerjee** (1848-1925): After a brief period as a member of the Indian Civil Service Surendranath became a college teacher, a journalist and a political leader of great size and power. He belonged to the moderate Wing of the Congress and chose the constitutional path for political reform. **Moslem League:** Moslem (Muslim) League was founded by Aga Khan and other Muslim aristocrats with British encouragement as a political organisation specifically for Muslims on December 31, 1906. Over the years the League became a powerful political organisation and its demand for a separate state for Indian Muslims was granted in 1947 when India was partitioned and Pakistan was born.

*The Christian Commonwealth* (13 February, 1918)

**Sacrifice and Other Plays:** Includes translations of four plays and playlets: *Sanyasi*, *Mahini*, *Sacrifice*, *The King and the Queen* and *Karna and Kunti*, Translated by Tagore himself.

*The Manchester Guardian* (28 March, 1918)

[John] **Burns** (1863-1928): Scottish classical scholar known for his works on his editions of Plato and Aristotle.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (22 August, 1918)

**The Parrot's Training:** Translation of *Totakahini* by the poet himself; a satire reflecting the mockery of any system of education where students are used as machine products for the purpose of generating wealth for the nation, without freeing their mind and soul. The central theme is still relevant. The translation appeared in the journal *Asia* (published from USA) with sketches by Abanindranath. A new translation was published in 1993 from the Tagore Centre UK). **Prof. Patrick Geddes** (1854-1932): Scottish Botanist; Professor of Botany at Dundee University (1854-1932). He took the theory of evolution as a basis for ethics, sociology and history. A good friend of Tagore.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (28 November, 1918)

**Professor** [Sarvepalli] **Radhakrishnan** (1888-1975): Indian philosopher and statesman, became Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford; knighted in 1931; member of the League of Nations (1931-39); and finally became the President of India. His Hibbert Lecture of 1929 published as *An Idealist View of Life* was his celebrated work. Radhakrishnan represented Oxford University in conferring D.Litt, *honoris causa*, on Rabindranath held in Shantiniketan in 1940.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (29 May, 1919)

[William] **Wilkie Collins** (1824-89): English novelist, once emigrated to Italy. After his return entered Lincoln's Inn to practice law, subsequently took to literature. His celebrated works include - *Antonina, or the Fall of Rome, Basil and The Woman in White*. [Friedrich Wilhelm] **Nietzsche** (1844-1900): German philosopher and critic; Professor of Classical Philosophy at Basel. A disciple of Schopenhauer. Celebrated works: *Die Geburt der Tragodie, Unzeitgemässige Betrachtungen, Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Genealogie der Moral*. Although he was not anti-Semitic and nationalist much of his esoteric doctrine appealed to the Nazis.

*The Times* (19 June, 1919)

**Punjab disturbances:** In February, 1919 a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Rowlatt to investigate sedition and conspiracy against the British government in India. Its recommendations called for all the apparatus of a police state, with summary courts and powers of internment - the proposals were accepted by Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy of India.. Gandhi immediately offered *Satyagraha* against the Rowlatt Act by declaring an all-India strike on 6 April, 1919. He was arrested on 8 April. The whole country was in disorders. On 13 April, 1919, troops under General Dyer fired 1600 rounds of ammunition on unarmed civilians, assembled in a peaceful gathering ignoring the carfew at Jalianwalla Bagh at Amritsar, Punjab. This mindless massacre was covered up by the British Press for a considerable length of time. Tagore was very much disturbed and appalled by this incident and wrote on 29 May, 1919 to the then Viceroy of India a long letter condemning the massacre. 'Considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population,' he wrote, "disarmed and resourceless, by a power which has the most terribly efficient organization for destruction of human lives, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification. ...The very least I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who for their so-called insignificance are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings.' However, his request for revoking the title was never accepted by the British government and he had always been addressed as Sir Rabindranath. Tagore, however, never used this title any more.

*The Church Times* (1 August, 1919)

**The Home and the World:** Translation of Tagore's Bengali novel *Ghare Baire*. This Bengali novel was highly criticised by his home readers for Tagore's altogether new exploration of the heroine Bimala's emotions was found immoral; Sandip's approach towards *Swadeshi* had been grossly misrepresented and unpatriotic Nikhilesh who stood against the boycott and burning of foreign goods. **Swadeshi:** Literally means anything home-made. During the nationalist movement there was a call for boycotting foreign goods and using home products by the followers of Gandhi who were identified as Swadeshi. **Bande Mataram** : Hail Motherland! these words were first used by Bankim Chatterjee in a song in one of his novel *Anandamath*. Later on Tagore set this piece into music and this music was subsequently used as a nationalist anthem by the Indian Congress. [Fyodor Mikhailovich] **Dostoevsky** (1821-81): Russian novelist; his celebrated works: *Crime and Punishment, The Brothers Karamazov, House of the Dead*.

*The Queen* (21 May, 1921)

**The Wreck:** In 1906 Tagore published the novel *Naukadubi*. It was translated from Bengali by J.G.Drummond and published by Macmillan in 1921 as *The Wreck*. **Glimpses of Bengal** : Collection of Tagore's letters written mainly to his niece Indira Devi and his friend Srish Chandra Mazumder. Translated by Surendranath Tagore. The original Bengali was published in as *Chinnapatra* (torn leaves).

Retranslated in 1991 by Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson (see *Purabi, a miscellany in memory of Rabindranath Tagore, 1941-91*, pp54-65, The Tagore Centre UK)

*The Times* (24 May, 1921).

**H[arald] H[offding]** (1843-1931): Danish philosopher, author of *Psykologi I Omruds pa Grundning af Erfaringen* and *Den nyere Filosofis Historie*.

*The Morning Post* (5 September, 1921)

**Union of East and West:** This Theatre group founded by K N Dasgupta possibly after the demise of the Indian Art and Dramatic Society. ***The Farewell Curse:*** Translation of the verse *Biday Abhishap* written in the form of dialogue. **Dhan Gopal Mukherjee** (1890-1936): A versatile writer born in India but settled in USA. Awarded the Newbury Prize from America for his writings which include: *Kari, the Elephant, Jungle Beasts and Man, Secret Listeners of the East* and *The Face of Silence*. It was the last named book reading which Romain Rolland was profoundly interested in Ramakrishna.

*The Times* (12 September, 1921)

**"Mr. Gandhi, who had an interview with Sir Rabindranath Tagore":** Gandhi visited Tagore at his residence in Calcutta on 6 September, 1921. They had a long discussion in presence of Andrews behind closed door. Gandhi wanted Tagore to support his non-violence movement but failed to pursue the poet. **Caliphate agitation:** From 1512 to 1922 the Emperor of Turkey was the Khalifa or the Head of the Muslim World. During the first world war the Emperor pledged his support for Germany; was defeated by the allied forces and consequently lost a large portion of his empire. Since then Turkey was in constant crisis which eventually upset and agitated the Muslims of India. On 19 November, 1919 a Central Chaliphate Committee was formed in Bombay. Gandhi and some of the top Hindu leaders of Indian Congress presumed that if Hindus support the Chilaphate Movement then there would be an unity between the two communities and this would strengthen Gandhi's non-cooperation movement against the British. In a special Congress session held in Calcutta the proposal to support the Chilaphate movement was accepted and Gandhi started his non-co-operation movement. However the non-violent movement sometimes degenerated into violence and communal unrest spread all over India. The movement died down after a while. Tagore did not approve the involvement of the Congress in the Chilaphate movement.

*The Daily Chronicle* (24 October, 1921)

**Trial by Luck:** This is a prose translation of his verse play *Laksmi Pariksha*. The Bengali version was written in 1897 and its translation was first published in *The Modern Review* in 1920. The Book was never published in the West. **Bhababhuti:** Well-known Sanskrit dramatist of the 8th century. His best known play is *Malati-madhava*.

*The Daily Mail* (26 October, 1921)

**The Fugitive:** First published by Macmillan in New York and subsequently in London in 1921. Poems in this collection are taken from his Bengali prose poems *Lipika, Kahini* and his anthology *Sanchayita*. It also includes translations of 17 religious lyrics under the headings – *Vaishnava Songs, Baul Songs* and *Hindi songs of Janadas*.

*The Scotsman* (13 March, 1922)

**The "Baul":** 'A Baul is one who, dressed in tattered cast-off garment deliberately made up of remnants of clothing previously worn by both Hindus and Moslems, wanders incessantly, living on whatever those who listen to his songs, which are his only form of worship, chose to give him...' (Edward C. Dimock). He plays a primitive but haunting one-stringed instrument, called *ek-tara*. His songs are exalted expression of boundless love towards his deity which, however, is never defined in terms of any definite religious system or sect. In many songs composed by Rabindranath there is evidence of Baul influence.

*The Manchester Guardian* (28 March, 1922)

**Creative Unity**: First published by Macmillan New York in 1922 and subsequently published in London. It includes ten lectures - *The Poet's Religion*, *The Creative Ideal*, *The religion of the Forest*, *An Indian Folk Religion*, *East and West*, *The Modern Age*, *The Spirit of Freedom*, *The Nation*, *Woman and Home* and *the Eastern University* - all were written first in English and delivered in the West during his 1921 - tour. According to Tagore's first Bengali biographer, Mukherjee 'what is new in these volumes (*Creative Unity* and *Personality*) is that most of these essays were composed in English, and there is greater ease and clarity in the use of the language and terminology than there was in *Sadhana*.' According to Mukerjee the epithet *Creative* in the title was used in line with *The Creative Evolution* of Henry Bergson and *The Creative Understanding* of Count Keyserling. The book was dedicated to Dr E. H. Lewis of Harvard University.

*The New Leader* (23 February, 1923)

**G[oldsworthy]. Lowes Dickinson** (1862-1932): English writer and essayist. Author of *Letters of John Chinaman* and *The Greek View of Life*.

*The New Leader* (15 February)

**Gora**: Translation of his Bengali novel *Gora*; translated by W. W. Pearson. [Nikolai Vasilievich] **Gogol** (1809-52): Russian novelist and playwright. Among his two masterpieces *Inspector-General* is a comedy and *Dead souls* is a novel. [Maxim] **Gorky** (1868-1936): Russian writer; his autobiographical trilogy was his best writing. [Anton Pavlovitch] **Tchekov** (1860-1904): Russian author and one of the most popular short-story writers famous outside his own country. His celebrated works include: *The Wood Demon*, *The Seagull*, *The Three Sisters*, *The tails of Anton Tchekov*. Barchester novels: "...*Hegelian subtlety*...": **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770-1831) was one of the two greatest German idealist philosophers. The other was Kant whose system Hegel modified in his dialectics. His famous works *Enzyklopadie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* and *Philosophie des Rechts*.

*The Times* (7 October, 1924)

**"Dr. Rabindranath Tagore ... to lecture at the Hebrew University"**: Tagore finally did not come to Jerusalem as his sailing date to Latin America was brought forward and he had to rush to Cherbourg to board the ship. But when he reached Cherbourg his sailing was delayed.

*The Times* (20 October, 1924)

**"Sir Rabindranath Tagore ... to attend the celebration of the Centenary"**: In 1924 Peru celebrated the Tricentenary year of Independence and invited several distinguished people of the world including Tagore to attend the celebration. Tagore accepted this invitation and sailed for Peru on 18 October, 1924 from France. However, Tagore could not finally reach Peru as he became seriously ill while he was in Argentina and cancelled the tour. After recuperating nearly a month in Argentina he returned to Europe, started his tour in Milan; became ill again and returned to India after two weeks.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (9 July, 1925)

**Red Oleanders**: Translation of his Bengali drama *Raktakarabi* written in 1923 and published by Macmillan in 1925. The play was translated from the original manuscript as the Bengali play published in December, 1926. The symbolism of this play was not appreciated by his English readers and was subjected to some harsh criticisms by the British press. The drama was dedicated to Elmhirst.

*The Nation and The Athenaeum* (18 July, 1925)

[Sir] **Max Beerbohm** (1872-1956): English essayist, satirist, caricaturist and critic. Beerbhom's collection of cartoons of famous contemporaries was published in his book *A Christmas Garland*.

*East Anglian Daily Times* (27 July, 1925)

**The Augustan Books of Modern Poetry:** The entire series of twenty slim volumes of modern poetry, published by Messers Ernest Benn, include the works of Bridges, Blunden, Tagore, Brooke, Belloc, Keats, Shelley, Chesterton, Blake, Davidson, Squire, Freeman, Graves, Harvell, Omar Khayyam, Davies, Canton, Drinkwater, Stevenson and a Christmas Anthology. The entire series was edited by Edward Thompson.

*The Daily Telegraph* (13 September, 1925)

**Broken Ties and Other Stories:** This collection includes short stories, one novella and one poem of Tagore, translated from original Bengali by several translators. The stories are *Broken Ties* (*Chaturanga*), *In the Night* (*Nisithe*), *The Fugitive Gold* (*Swarna Mriga*), *The Editor* (*Sampadak*), *Giribala* (*Mrgh O Roudra*), *The Lost Jewels* (*Monihara*), and *Emancipation* (*Ponisodh*) of which only *Giribala* was translated by Tagore himself.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (14 January, 1926)

**"... a fairy story or a myth like that of Demeter and Persephone...":** In Greek mythology Persephone, Demeter's daughter was abducted by Pluto in the Earth. Demeter enraged by this incident, being the God responsible for crops in Earth, stopped its production. As a result, Pluto consented to Persephone's return but gave her the seed of a pomegranate to eat. Persephone ate the seed and returned to Olympus, the abode of Demeter. Now that she had eaten the seed in the earth she was obliged to spend one third of the year with Pluto. [Samuel Taylor] **Coleridge** (1772-1834): English poet; an intimate friend of Wordsworth. His famous works include *Lycal Ballads*, *Remorse*. T[homas] S[tearns]. **Eliot** (1888-1965): American born British poet. Awarded Nobel prize for literature in 1948. His celebrated works: *The Waste Land*, *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets*. Tagore translated one of Eliot's poems *The Journey of Magi* into Bengali (*Tirthayatra*).

*The Birmingham Mail* (10 June, 1926)

**"...in Italy on a visit to Signor Mussolini.":** In 1926 Tagore visited Italy for a second time. His first visit was sixteen months ago when he was invited by Duke Gallarati Scotti, an anti-fascist aristocrat of Milan. During that tour he was severely criticised by the Fascist press. Tagore was aware of such publicity. However, in 1925-tour he met Prof. Carlo Formici, a distinguished Orientalist of the Rome University who also acted as his interpreter. Eventually Tagore invited Prof. Formici as a visiting lecturer to his University. Formici joined almost immediately along with another Italian scholar, Giuseppe Tucci. Formici arranged the whole library of Italian classics as a gift to Tagore's University by Mussolini as a gesture of goodwill. Tagore was overwhelmed by this gesture and when he expressed his intention of visiting Italy for the second time Mussolini offered his hospitality. Why was Mussolini so interested on Tagore? After all he was from a country neither free nor sovereign. One explanation might be that Mussolini wanted a mouthpiece for the propaganda of his fascist activities, and as Tagore at that time was a powerful uplifting influence in the world by reason his gifts and nobel personality the choice was well made. However, for Tagore this tour went terribly wrong. His tour was carefully planned by the State. He was shown the best things in Italys and his lectures and statement were often exaggerated in the press. Tagore, due to his ignorance of the language was hardly aware of this and the anti-fascist press in Europe was dismayed to observe Tagore's support for Fascism. When Tagore left Italy he met Romain Rolland at Villeneuve. He also met several expatriots from Italy and gradually began to realise the seriousness of the situation and wrote a long letter to Andrews which was later published in *The Manchester Guardian* (5 August, 1926).

*The Westminster Gazette* (6 August, 1926)

[Sir Jacob] **Epstein** (1880-1959): An outstanding British sculptor whose bronzed heads of celebrities include Einstein, Tagore, Eliot and Shaw.

*The Daily News* (7 August, 1926)

[George] **Bernard Shaw** (1856-1950): Irish playwright, essayist and critic. In 1925 Shaw was awarded the Nobel prize for literature, but donated the money to inaugurate the Anglo-Swedish Literary Foundation. His celebrated works were: *Androcles and the Lion*, *Pygmalion*, *Saint Joan* and *Fabian Essays*.

*Glasgow Daily Record* (7 August, 1926)

"...**Miss Sybil Thorndike in a new play...**": Dame Sybil Thorndike (1882-1976) Distinguished British stage actress married to Lewis T. Casson, played Shakespearean leads, visited India in 1955.

*The Manchester Guardian* (9 August, 1926)

"...**he will be the guest of a well-known citizen of Europe...**": Refers to Leonard Elmhirst in Dartington, Devon.

*The Manchester Guardian* (25 August, 1926)

**Sylvain Levi** (1863-1935): French Orientalist, Lecturer in Santiniketan between 1921-23. **Maurice Winternitz** (1863-1937): Austrian Indologist, Professor of Indian philology in Prague. Visiting professor in Santiniketan from February 1923-24. Stenkonow: **Benedetto Croce** (1866-1952): Italian philosopher, literary critic and historian. **Carlo Formichi** (1871-1913): Italian orientalist, Professor of Sanskrit at Rome University, visiting Professor in Santiniketan in 1925.

*The New Leader* (27 August, 1926)

**H[enry] N[oel] Brailsford** (1873-1958): An English socialist author and political journalist. He joined the Independent Labour Party in 1907 and edited (1922-1926) its weekly organ *The New Leader*; a leading writer in several influential papers including *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Daily Herald*.

*The Inquirer* (25 September, 1926)

[Rudolf Christoph] **Eucken** (1846-1926): German philosopher; awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1908.

*The Manchester Guardian* (4 October, 1926)

"**Dr. Tagore to visit Russia**": Tagore could not make his visit this time due to illness.

*The Birmingham Post* (5 November, 1926)

**Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist**: this book of Thompson was a critical study of the Poet's literary career. It is an extended and more carefully researched version of the previous monograph on the subject. However, Tagore was extremely unhappy with this book and he vent his anger in a letter to Rothstein on 20 April, 1927. 'It is one of the most absurd books,' wrote Tagore, 'that I have ever read dealing with a poet's life and writings. All through his pages he has never allowed his readers to guess that he has a very imperfect knowledge of Bengali language which necessarily prevents him from realising the atmosphere of our words and therefore the colour and music and life of them...On the whole the author is never afraid to be unjust, and that only shows his want of respect. I am certain he would have been much more careful in his treatment if his subject were a continental poet of reputation in Europe.'

*The Observer* (14 November, 1926)

**Sandor Kisfaludy** (1772-1844): Hungarian poet. **Maurice (Maurus) Jokai** (1825-1904): Hungarian novelist His famous works include *The Turks in Hungary*, *The Magyar Nabob* and *Black Diamonds*.

*The Friend* (23 May, 1930)

**The Society of Friends**: This was the Society of Quakers, a group of special religious faith who believed in ..... Quakers' a special form of simple worship journal was *The Friend*. Tagore first came in the contact

with one of its distinguished members, Horace Alexander, who visited Santiniketan in 1928. In 1930 Tagore spent few days in Quakers' settlement at Woodbrooke in Selly Oak in Birmingham for two reasons. First his exhibition of paintings was arranged in the Birmingham Art Gallery and, secondly he wanted to stay in recluse to prepare his Hibbert lectures. However, during his stay he attended their annual convention and delivered a lecture in their Annual General Meeting. **Ariam** [Aryanayakam] **Williams**: Tagore's secretary. **Amiya Chakrabarti** (1901-1986): A major poet of post-Tagore era in India, Tagore's one time secretary, edited *Tagore Reader* from Macmillan, New York. His English writings include: *The Dynasts and the Post-War Age in Poetry*, *A Saint at work* and *The Emergent Design*.

*The Manchester Guardian* (27 May, 1930)

**Hibbert Lectures**: Robert Hibbert (1770-1849), a British merchant born in West Indies founded Hibbert Trust whose funds are used for Hibbert lectures and for the publication of the Hibbert Journal. Tagore was originally invited to deliver Hibbert lectures in 1928, but failed to come to Oxford due to illness. However, he finally made it in 1930. Tagore delivered three lectures on 19, 21 and 26 May at Manchester College, Oxford. The subject was *The Religion of Man*. The lectures were later published by Unwin and Co., London. **Sir Michael Sadler** (1888-1957): An English author and publisher. Vice-chancellor of Leeds University.

*The Birmingham Mail* (4 June, 1930)

"...the drawings by Sir Rabindranath Tagore...": At the age of 67 Tagore's creativity found a new way of expression, with ink and brush. Without any formal training of art he started painting and till death he had painted nearly 2000 canvases. The beginning of his painting career was very interesting. He used to draw funny shapes around his manuscript especially to hide rejected words and sentences and from this 'casualty of manuscript' he gradually started independent sketches and paintings with ink and watercolour.

*The Times* (5 June, 1930)

**Sir Francis Younghusband** (1863-1942): British explorer; deeply religious; founded the World Congress of Faith in 1936.

*The Times* (29 September, 1930)

"...Izvestia on Friday published..." Tagore was trying to visit Russia since 1926 but there were always some hindrance. However, he finally succeeded during his last visit in Europe in 1930. This time he was accompanied by Amiya Chakravarti, Ariam Aryanayakam - his secretary, Hary Timbers - an American doctor who was also involved with Tagore's rural reconstruction project and Einstein's daughter Margaret. Tagore was deeply impressed observing Russia's success in the field of mass education. This time he did not make any comment on Bolsavism or on political systems that might evoke criticism in the press like his tour in Italy. Before leaving Moscow he was interviewed by a reporter of *Izvestia* when he expressed his unfailing praise for the system of education introduced in Russia. The interview was published in the *Manchester Guardian* but did not appear in *Izvestia* until 1988. (see *Rabindranath Tagore - the Myriad Minded Man*, Dutta and Robinson, Bloomsbury, 1995, p.297). His visit lasted for two weeks (from 11 to 25 September). From Russia Tagore used to send letters to his son which were later published as *Rashid Chiti (Letters from Russia)*. British Government was not happy with the publication of his letters from Russia and there was a debate in the Parliament whether the book should be proscribed. However the book was never banned.

*The Friend* (21 October, 1930)

**Rabindranath Tagore: A Proposal**: Tagore did not approve of this appeal. In a letter to Rothenstein he wrote on 24 August, 1930, 'The appeal for help which Andrews intend to publish in your papers never had my sanction and I have stopped it.' In spite of that the appeal went out. How much fund was raised was not known.

*The Manchester Guardian* (9 January, 1931)

**Sir [Ralph] Norman Angell** (1872-1967): An English pacifist; awarded the Nobel prize for Peace in 1933) **Mr Evelyn Wrench**: Editor of *The Spectator*.

*The Spectator* (27 June, 1931)

Chaitanya: **Knut Hamsun** (1859-1952): Pseudonym of Knut Pederson. Norwegian writer awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1920. His best-known book is *The Growth of the Soil*. [Herbert George] **Wells** (1866-1946): A powerful English writer of the first quarter of the 20th Century. Some of his scientific writings were immensely readable and some of his short stories have lasting beauty. His celebrated works include *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds* and *Ann Veronica*: Bertrand Russell: **Sarat [Chandra] Chatterji** (1876-1938): Contemporary to Tagore, a powerful and popular novelist in India. His works include *Mejdidi*, *Srikanta*, *Debdas*, *Parneeta*, *Chitrachin*.

*The Times* (30 October, 1931)

**Gertrude Emerson [Sen]** (1890-1982): American journalist and writer, wife of an Indian scientist Boshi Sen. One time editor of the journal *Asa* published from America.

*The Peterborough Citizen* (17 November, 1931)

**Ronald Colman** (1891-1958): Distinguished British romantic actor. Went to Hollywood in 1920. His best films are *The Dark Angel*, *Lost Horizon*, *The Prisoner of Zenda* and so on.

*The Spectator* (30 January, 1932)

**"Mahatmaji has been arrested..."**: While Gandhi was in London to attend the Round Table conference, there was political unrest throughout India. When he returned to Bombay he found that a number of the Congress leaders including Nehru were imprisoned by the Government. As a result the Congress was determined to revive the civil disobedience campaign once again with the help of Gandhi. However, the government immediately arrested Gandhi.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (18 February, 1932)

**The Child**: This is a long poem written first in English and subsequently translated in Bengali - *Sisuthurtha*. The poet wrote this poem inspired by watching the Passion Play in a village in Germany.

*The Times* (16 May, 1932)

[George] **Gilbert [Aime] Murray** (1866-1957): Born in Australia and settled in Britain. Murray was a classical scholar; professor of Greek in Glasgow and Oxford; President of the League of Nations from 1923 to 1938; author of *Ancient Greek Literature*, *The Rise of the Greek Epic* and *Five Stages of Greek Religion*.

*The Times* (8 February, 1933)

**Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru** (1889-1964): Indian statesman and later became the first Prime Minister of independent India. As a democratic leader of the first republic within the Commonwealth, he followed a policy of neutralism and peace-making during the Cold War, often acting as a go between the Great Powers. His works include *Soviet Russia*, *India and the World*, *Discovery of India*.

*The Times* (4 January, 1936)

**Ronald Newson** (1909-42): English poet and musician; went to Santiniketan as an English Tutor, but returned to England within six months due to illness. These two paintings were for a long time hidden under heaps of paper in Croydon Library which was unearthed by some members of the Tagore Centre UK in 1988.

*The Times Literary Supplement* (1 February, 1936)

**Michael Madhusudan Datta** (1824-73): Indian poet who in his early years absorbed European culture, became Christian and started his career as an English verse writer, later he wrote verse and plays in Bengali. His English writings included *Captive Ladie*, *Visions of the Past* and the celebrated Bengali works include *Meghanad Badha Kavya*, *Sarmistha* and *Tillotoma*. **Hugh MacDiarmid** (1892-?): Pseudonym of Christopher Murray Grieve; Scottish poet and pioneer of the Scottish literary renaissance. **R[obert] C[alverley] Trevelyan** (1872-1951): English poet and playwright. **Premendranath Mitra** (1904-88): A poet and writer of post-Tagore era. **Samar Sen** (1916-87): One of the distinguished poets of India, at one time editor of the paper *Now and Frontier*. **Ezra [Loomis] Pound** (1885-1972): An American poet, London editor of the Chicago *Little Review*. Eliot regarded him as a force behind modern poetry. his famous work *Pisan Cantos*. **T[homas] S[tearns] Eliot** (1888-1965): American born British poet, critic and dramatist. Eliot was seen as a writer of modern poetry related to modern life and expressed in modern idiom, preferably in free verse. Awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1948. His outstanding works include *The Waste Land*, *The Criterion* and *Four Quartets*. Tagore translated one of Eliot's poem *The Journey of Magi* in Bengali *Tirthajatri*. **D[avid] H[erbert] Lawrence** (1885-1930): English poet and novelist. His popular writings include *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*. [Narashima Chintaman] **Kelkar** (1872-1947): A great Maharastrian writer of India

*Belfast Newsletter* (16 July, 1936)

**Communal Award**: On 20 September 1932, the British Government took the decision of dividing the Hindu community by given the 'untouchables' a separate status with their own electorates. Gandhi, then imprisoned in Yarveda Jail in Poone resumed fasting till death in protest against this vivisection. Tagore receiving the news of Gandhi's health came to visit him at the Jail. Meanwhile, a compromise was reached at the end on 26 September when Gandhi broke his fasting in the presence of Tagore. During that occasion Tagore sang hymn from *Gitanjali* which was one of Mahatma's favourite.

*Liverpool Daily Post* (11 November, 1936)

**Collected Poems and Plays** : This is an anthology of Tagore's writings incorporating *Gitanjali*, *The Gardener*, *Crescent Moon*, *Fugitive*, *Chitra* and *The Sacrifice and other Plays*. It was published in October, 1936 in connection with the 75th birthday of Tagore and was the last book to be published in England before his death.

*John O' London's Weekly* (27 November, 1936)

**The Oxford Book of Modern Verse**: An anthology edited by W.B.Yeats published in 1936. It includes seven poems of Tagore. The poems are: *Day after Day* (*Gitanjali* 76), *If it is not my portion* (*Gitanjali* 79), *I have got my leave* (*Gitanjali* 93), *On the slope of desolate river* (*Gitanjali*: 64), *The Yellow bird sings* (*The Gardener* 17), *In the dusky path of a dream* (*The Gardener* 62) and *Thou art the sky*: (*Gitanjali* 67)

*The Morning Post* (16 February, 1937)

**B[asabendra] N[ath] Tagore**: Tagore's grandson

*The Star* (16 February, 1937)

"...**festival with Tagore's play**...": This is the first reference to a Bengali play enacted in London. The play was one of Tagore's comedy, *Baikunther Khata*.

*The Luton News* (22 April, 1937)

**Lady Russell**: Wife of Sir [E] John Russell.

*The Spectator* (7 May, 1937)

**To Africa** : On 2 October, 1935 Italy attacked Abyssinia and occupied the country without much effort. Amiya Chakravarty, the poet, and one time Tagore's secretary requested Tagore to write something on his reaction on this aggression. Tagore wrote the original Bengali version on 8 February, 1935.

*The News Chronicle (10 September, 1937)*

**"Tagore...were all attacked for their support of Madrid"**: In 1937 Tagore appealed to the republican side in the Spanish Civil War writing ' This devastating tide of International Fascism must be checked.... come in your millions to the aid of democracy, to the succour of civilisation and culture.'(cited from Dutta and Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore, the Myriad-Minded Man*, Bloomsbury, London, 1995 p343). For his support to Spain he became unpopular in Germany.

*The Manchester Guardian (10 March, 1938)*

**New Constitution for India**. The new constitution was basically a modification of the Government of India Act of 1935. It incorporated all the stages of constitutional development up to that date, and added two new principles: that a federal structure should be organised and that popular responsible government should be set up in the provinces. Tagore wrote this letter to the Editor of *the Manchester Guardian* on 28 February, 1938.

*The News Chronicle (10 December, 1938)*

**"...exhibition of his pictures ... at the Calmann Gallery..."**: This time the exhibition of Tagore's paintings was organised under the auspice of the India Society at Calmann Gallery from 9 December, 1938 to 5 January, 1939. **Lord Zetland** : Secretary of State for India.

*The Observer (11 December, 1938)*

**The Poet's Battle**: A series of open letters between Tagore and the Japanese poet Noguchi. Tagore condemned the Japanese aggression in China which had been defended by Noguchi. **Rash Behari Bose**: A self-confessed terrorist who was living in Japan under the protection of ultra-right Japanese nationalist. Founder of India Independence League in Japan also supporter of Japanese aggression in China.

*The Manchester Guardian (15 December, 1938)*

**Dr. Tagore and the Czechs**: This letter was written on 15 October, 1938 to Prof. Lesny, after the Munich Agreement when a part of Czechoslovakia (Sudeten) was handed over to Nazi Germany. Tagore was very much upset at this incident.

*The Times (28 February, 1940)*

**Oxford to honour Dr. Tagore**: Tagore was awarded D.Litt *honoris causa* in 1940 a year before his death. The previous proposal of honouring him with D.Litt in 1912 was strongly objected by Lord Curzon, the then Chancellor of Oxford University.

*The Times (8 August, 1940)*

**Sir Maurice Gwyer** (-1952): Chief Justice of the Federal Court of India.

*The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post (8 August, 1941)*

[Ignacio] **Zuloaga** (1870-1945): Spanish painter; studied painting in Rome and in Paris, reviver of the national tradition in Spanish painting. **"... I have seen couple of his strange productions..."**: Reference of two paintings of Tagore brought by Randal Newson from Santiniketan. See the newsitem published in *The Times* on 4 January, 1936.

## Subject Index

### **Appeal for Fund for Visva-Bharati University**

*The Friend* (211030)

### **Appeal for Mr Montague as Viceroy**

*The Times* (110820)

### **Articles - on Bengali literature**

*The Times Literary Supplement* (010236)

#### **- on Bolpur School**

*The Daily Telegraph* (260214)  
*The Times Ed. Supplement* (210916)

#### **- on Children and Opera**

*The Times Educational Supplement* (040116)

#### **- on C. F. Andrews**

*The Inquirer* (110239)

#### **- The English in India**

*The Manchester Guardian* (021036)

#### **- A League of spirit**

*The Nation and The Athenaeum* (090419)

#### **- on Literary revival in Bengal**

*The Spectator* (270631)

#### **- Santiniketan by Ramsey Macdonald**

*The Daily Chronicle* (120114)

*Public Opinion* (300114)

#### **- of Tagore**

*The Spectator* (070630)

*The Manchester Guardian sp. supplement* (280318)

#### **- on Tagore**

*The Baptist Times and Freeman* (130214)

*Camberwell Borough Advertiser* (240217)

*The Christian World* (140126)

*The Daily Mail* (291013)

*The Daily News* (070826)

*The Dundee Advertiser* (030114;

*Everyman* (141113) (050630)

*The Manchester Guardian sp. supplement* (280318)

*The New Leader* (230223)

*The Passing Show* (101232)

*The Times* (230240)

#### **- on to establish a connection between the visit of Prince of Sweden and the Nobel prize award**

*Truth* (241213)

#### **- on War in Africa**

*The Manchester Guardian* (011135)

### **Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore**

*The Observer* (251014)

### **Broken Ties and Other Stories - reviews**

*Aberdeen Press and Journal* (071225)

*The Birmingham Gazette* (101225)

*The Birmingham Post* (201125)  
*The British Weekly* (101225)  
*The Church Times* (150126)  
*The Daily News* (301125)  
*The Daily Telegraph* (131025)  
*The Illustrated London News* (051225)  
*The Irish Times* (080126)  
*Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (121225)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (201125)  
*The Manchester Guardian Weekly* (271125)  
*The Methodist Times* (080426)  
*The Outlook* (281125)  
*The Scotsman* (070126)  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (181225)  
*The Southport Guardian* (220526)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (140126)  
*The Yorkshire Post* (111125)

#### **Canadian Conference - report**

*The Times* (220329)  
*The Times* (060429)

#### **Children and Opera**

*The Times Educational Supplement* (040116)

#### **Chitra - read**

*The Globe* (100513)  
*The Times* (100513)  
*The Westminster Gazette* (100513)

#### **Chitra - reviews**

*The Athenaeum* (170114)  
*The Nation* (240114)  
*The Outlook* (031014)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (140514)  
*The Western Mail* (101014)  
*The Westminster Gazette* (070214)

#### **Closing of Presidency College**

*The Times Educational Supplement* (020516)

#### **Collected Poems and Plays - reviews**

*The Church Times* (150137)  
*The Friend* (111236)  
*The Glasgow Herald* (191136)  
*Irish Independent* (291236)  
*The Irish Times* (261236)  
*The Liverpool Daily Post* (111136)  
*The Northern Echo* (301236)  
*The Northern Whig and Belfast Post* (051236)  
*Time and Tide* (160137)  
*The Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror* (281136)

#### **Commons debate on 'on Russia' - report**

*The Times* (131134)

#### **Court case on copyright - reports**

*The Times* (060229)

**Creative Unity - reviews**

*The Times* (290429)  
*The Times* (030629)  
*Aberdeen Daily Journal* (100422)  
*The Birkenhead News* (270522)  
*The Birmingham Gazette* (170422)  
*The Birmingham Post* (210322)  
*The British Weekly* (250522)  
*Christian World* (270422)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (160322)  
*The Daily Mail* (130322)  
*The Daily News* (010322)  
*The Inquirer* (010422)  
*The Irish Times* (280422)  
*The Liverpool Courier* (190722)  
*Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (230522)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (280322)  
*The Northern Echo* (040422)  
*The Northern Whig and Belfast* (080422)  
*The Observer* (160422)  
*The Saturday Review* (010422)  
*The Scotsman* (130322)  
*The Sunday Times* (230722)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (250522)  
*Western Mail* (150522)  
*Yorkshire Gazette* (150422)  
*The Yorkshire Observer* (250422)

**Crescent Moon - reviews**

*The Baptist Times and Freeman* (130214)  
*The Birkenhead News* (271213)  
*The Birmingham Daily Post* (061213)  
*The Christian Commonwealth* (171213)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (121213)  
*The Dartford Chronicle and District Times* (121213)  
*Evening Standard and St. James' Gazette* (041213)  
*The Glasgow Herald* (251213)  
*The Globe* (271113)  
*The Inquirer* (201213)  
*The Irish Times* (130214)  
*The Kelso Mail* (311213)  
*The Manchester Courier* (070114)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (060114)  
*Montrose Standard and Angus and mearn Register* (261213)  
*The Nation* (131213)  
*Pall Mall Gazette* (261113)  
*The Saturday Review* (271213)  
*The Scotsman* (081213)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (140514)

**Croydon Paintings information**

*The Municipal Journal and Public Works Engineer* (170636)

*The Star* (100236)  
*The Times* (040136)  
*Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror* (040136)  
*The Western Morning News* (040136)

**Cycle of Spring – reviews** *The Manchester Guardian* (160417)  
*The New Witness* (310517)  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (300417)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (010317)  
*Western Mail* (040817)

**Dinner reception at Trocadero – report**  
*The Times* (130712)

**Drama – reports**  
*Chitra (in Germany)* *The Daily Chronicle* (081216)  
*Chitra (in London)* *The Daily Telegraph* (050520)  
*The Observer* (090520)  
*The Stage* (060520)

*Chitra (in Paris)* *The Times* (260522)  
*The Farewell Cursee* *The Morning Post* (050921)  
*King of the Dark Chamber (in Germany)*  
*The Times* (131120)

*King of the Dark Chamber (in Paris)*  
*The Times* (260522)

*King and Queen* *The Era* (190219)  
*The Stage* (200219)

*Maharani of Arakan* *The Times* (310712)

*Post office (in Dublin)*  
*The Irish Times* (190513)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (210513)

*Post office (in London)*  
*The Era* (160713)  
*The Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette* (110713)  
*The Globe* (110713)  
*The Stage* (170713)  
*The Standard* (110713)  
*The Times* (110713)  
*The Westminster Gazette* (110713)

*Sacrifice* *Brighton and Hove Herald* (110736)  
*The Christian Commonwealth* (130218)  
*The Daily Telegraph* (050520)  
*Evening News* (290736)  
*The Observer* (090520)  
*The Stage* (060520)  
*The Stage* (021237)  
*Sussex Daily News* (060736)  
*Westminster Chronicle* (031237)

*Sattes* *The Graphic* (020624)

**Trial by Luck**

*The Stage* (170724)  
*The Times* (140724)  
*The Daily Telegraph* (241021)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (241021)  
*The Morning Post* (0201121)

**Editorial - Triumph of Art** *The Times* (160712)

**Educational Conference in Canada**

*The Times* (060229)  
*The Times* (060429)

**Empire Day : Radio broadcast**

*Great Britain and the East* (270236)  
*The Daily Mirror* (120336)  
*Reynolds News* (150336)

**Exhibition of Paintings - reports**

***British Indian Union Gallery (London)***

*The Times* (050630)

***Birmingham Gallery (Birmingham)***

*The Birmingham Mail* (040630)

***Calmann Gallery (London)***

*Cavalclade* (171238)  
*The Daily Mail* (141238)  
*Great Britain and the East* (151238)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (151238)  
*The Observer* (181238)  
*The Sunday Times* (181238)  
*The Times* (101238)  
*The Yorkshire Evening Post* (101238)

**Fruit-gathering - reviews**

*The Birmingham Daily Post* (271216)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (191216)  
*The Daily Express* (081116)  
*The Harrow Gazette* (050117)  
*The Irish Times* (091216)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (190117)  
*Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register* (081216)  
*The Nation* (231216)  
*The Queen: The Lady's Newspaper* (030217)  
*The Sunday Times* (210117)

**The Fugitive - reviews**

*The Aberdeen Daily Journal* (071121)  
*The Birmingham Gazette* (201021)  
*The British Weekly* (171121)  
*The Christian World* (171121)  
*The Daily Mail* (261021)  
*Express and Star* (241221)  
*The Glasgow Evening Times* (141221)  
*The Irish Times* (111121)  
*Leytonstone Express and Independent* (101221)  
*Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (250122)

*The Manchester Guardian* (151121)  
*The Near East* (291221)  
*The Northern Echo* (181121)  
*The Northern Whig and Belfast Post* (021221)  
*The Nottingham Gazette* (101221)  
*The Observer* (231021)  
*Pall Mall Gazette* (100122)  
*The Saturday Review* (191121)  
*The Scotsman* (241021)  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (081221)  
*The Sunday Times* (041221)  
*The Western Morning News and Mercury* (121221)  
*The Wolverhampton Chronicle* (281221)  
*The Yorkshire Gazette* (261121)

**The Gardener – reviews**

*The Birkenhead News* (151113)  
*The Birmingham Daily Post* (061213)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (141113)  
*The Daily Mail* (291013)  
*The Daily News and Leader* (271013)  
*The Daily Telegraph* (141113)  
*The Kelso Mail* (311213)  
*The Observer* (121013)  
*Pall Mall Gazette* (141013)  
*The Scotsman* (161013)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (140514)  
*The Yorkshire Daily Observer* (211113)

**Gitanjali – reviews**

*The Athenaeum* (161112)  
*The Birmingham Daily Post* (061213)  
*The Daily News and Leader* (210113)  
*The Globe* (010413)  
*The New Statesman* (190413)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (140113)  
*The Nation* (161112)  
*The Spectator* (150213)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (071112)  
*Westminster Gazette* (071212)

**Gitanjali and Fruit-Gathering – review**

*The Spectator* (170519)

**Gladstone in India**

*The Times* (180214)

**Glimpses of Bengal – review**

*The Queen* (210521)

**Glimpses of Bengal Life – review**

*The Spectator* (130913)

**Halifax Address**

*The Yorkshire Observer* (030626)

**Home and the World – reviews**

*The Church Times* (010819)  
*The New Statesman* (111019)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (290519)

**How do you pronounce Tagore?***Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette (050114)***Hungry Stones and Other Stories - reviews***The Birmingham Daily Post (271216)**The Daily Express (081116)**The Daily Telegraph (291116)**Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury (310117)**The Manchester Guardian (121216)**Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register (151216)**The Nation (231216)**The New Statesman (130117)**The Outlook (091216)**The Queen: the Lady's Newspaper (030217)**The Southport Guardian (200117)**The Sunday Times (311216)**The Times Literary Supplement (231116)***Interviews***The Christian Commonwealth (210513)**The Westminster Gazette (210826)**The New Leader (270826)***King of the Dark Chamber - reviews***The Athenaeum (250714)**The Broad Arrow (170714)**The Daily Chronicle (220614)**The Daily Express (020714)**The Glasgow Herald (230714)**The Globe (150614)**The Illustrated London News (110714)**The Irish Times (100714)**The Manchester Courier (240714)**The Manchester Guardian (061014)**Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register (140814)**The Observer (140614)**The Outlook (031014)**Sheffield Daily Telegraph (240714)**The Scotsman (220614)**The Times Literary Supplement (180614)**The Yorkshire Observer (080714)***Knighthood - renunciation***The Times (190619)**The Times (020819)***Knighthood - reports***The Daily Mail (030615)**The Ladies' Field (120615)**The Times (030615)***League of Vagabonds***The Times (060121)***Lectures - reports****- Hibbert***Oxford Mail (200530)**Oxford Mail (220530)**Oxford Mail (270530)*

- The Times* (200530)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (270530)
- at Oxford *The Christian Commonwealth* (280513)
- Quest Society *The Inquirer* (240513)  
*The Inquirer* (310513)  
*The Inquirer* (070613)  
*The Inquirer* (140613)  
*The Inquirer* (210613)  
*The Inquirer* (280613)  
*The Westminster Gazette* (030613)  
*The Westminster Gazette* (180613)
- at Woodbrooke *The Friend* (300530)
- Letters to the Editor *The Nation and the Athenaeum* by Padraic Colum (171221)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* by J.D.Anderson (281118)
- Letter to Tagore by a School teacher  
*Public Opinion* (101215)
- London Chat *The Daily Citizen* (070214)
- Lover's Gift and Crossing - reviews  
*Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register* (240518)
- Maharani of Arakan - review  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (160316)
- Mashi and Other Stories - reviews  
*The Manchester Guardian* (260418)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (180418)  
*The Yorkshire Post* (220518)
- My Reminiscences - reviews  
*The Birmingham Daily Post* (150817)  
*The Camberwell Advertiser* (110817)  
*The Glasgow Herald* (200917)  
*The Inquirer* (011217)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (070817)  
*Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register* (240817)  
*The Morning Post* (200717)  
*The Nation* (250817)  
*The New Statesman* (040817)  
*The Observer* (190817)  
*The Outlook* (280717)  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (250717)  
*The Spectator* (250817)  
*The Sunday Times* (220717)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (090817)  
*Western Mail* (220817)  
*The Yorkshire Post* (150817)
- Nationalism - reviews  
*The Glasgow Herald* (200917)  
*The New Statesman* (150917)  
*The New Witness* (270917)

*The Spectator* (131017)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (130917)  
*The Yorkshire Post* (071117)

**Nobel Prize – criticisms**  
*The New Age* (201113) (111213)  
*The New Statesman* (271213)

**Nobel Prize and the Prince of Sweden**  
*Truth* (241213)

**Nobel Prize – reception at Santiniketan**  
*The Inquirer* (100114)  
*The Observer* (141213)  
*Westminster Gazette*

**Nobel Prize – reports and biographical sketches**  
*The Aberdeen Free Press* (171113)  
*The Aberdeen Daily Journal* (181113)  
*The Bazar, Exchange and Mart* (221113)  
*The Christian Commonwealth* (191113)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (141113)  
*The Daily Express* (141113)  
*The Daily Mail* (141113)  
*The Daily News and Leader* (141113)  
*The Daily Telegraph* (141113)  
*The Dundee Courier* (151113)  
*The Evening News* (141113)  
*The Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette* (141113)  
*Glasgow News* (141113)  
*The Globe* (141113)  
*The Irish Times* (141113) (151113)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (141113) (151113)  
*Pall Mall Gazette* (141113)  
*The Morning Post* (141113)  
*The Northern Whig* (171113)  
*The Sketch* (191113)  
*The Times* (141113) (151113)  
*Westminster Gazette* (141113)

**Obituary – articles : on Rabindranath Tagore**  
*The Listener* (140841)  
*The New Statesman and Nation* (160841)

**Obituary – meetings : on Rabindranath Tagore**  
*The Times* (180841) (011041) (271041)

**Obituary – news : Dwijendranath Tagore**  
*The Morning Post* (110226)

**Obituary – news and meetings on Rabindranath Tagore**  
*The Daily Herald* (080841)  
*The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* (080841)  
*The News Chronicle* (080841)  
*The Times* (080841)

**On Tagore's health**

*The Times* (130937)  
*The Times* (150937)  
*The Times* (300940)

**One Hundred Poems of Kabir – reviews**

*The Birmingham Daily Post* (190315)  
*The Christian Commonwealth* (100315)  
*The Daily News and Leader* (160415)  
*The Irish Times* (100915)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (070915)  
*The Morning Post* (070115)  
*The Observer* (070315)  
*The Scotsman* (220315)  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (050815)

**Oxford Book of Modern Verse – review**

*John O' London's Weekly* (271136)

**Oxford Degree – editorial**

*The Times* (080840)

**Oxford Degree – reports**

*The Listener* (070340)  
*The News Chronicle* (080840)  
*The Observer* (110840)  
*The Times* (280240)

**Parrot's Training – review**

*The Times Literary Supplement* (220918)

**Personality – reviews**

*The Birmingham Daily Post* (150817)  
*The Baptist Times and Freeman* (150617)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (190517)  
*The Glasgow Herald* (200917)  
*The Inquirer* (280717)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (210717)  
*The Northern Whig* (060817)  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (120617)  
*The Times Educational Supplement* (070617)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (310517)  
*Western Daily Press* (230617)  
*The Western Morning News* (080617)  
*The Yorkshire Post* (180717)

**The Post Office – reviews**

*The Athenaeum* (071114)  
*The Nation* (130315)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (151014)

**Poem on Rabindranath Tagore**

*The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (150515)

**Punch – comments**

*Punch* (101213)

**Rabindranath Tagore : a Biographical Study - reviews**

*The Athenaeum* (080515)  
*The Birmingham Daily Post* (070515)  
*The Birmingham Gazette* (040615)  
*The Church Family Newspaper* (160715)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (190515)

*The Dundee Advertiser* (280615)  
*The Field, The Country Gentleman's Newspaper* (080515)  
*The Glasgow Herald* (310815)  
*The Inquirer* (310715)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (070915)  
*The Nation* (080515)  
*The Northern Whig* (040615)  
*The Observer* (020515)  
*Pall Mall Gazette* (100515)  
*The Scotsman* (060515)  
*The Spectator* (260615)  
*The Standard* (010615)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (030615)  
*The Warrington Examiner* (021015)  
*The Western Daily Press* (310515)

**Rabindranath Tagore: His Personality and Work – reviews**

*The Church Times* (020639)  
*The Friend* (090639)  
*The Listener* (240839)  
*The Mansfield Reporter and Sutton-in-Ashfield Times* (090639)  
*Public Opinion* (090639)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (150439)

**Rabindranath Tagore on Russia**

*The Friend* (100731)

**Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist – reviews**

*The Aberdeen Daily Journal* (130222)  
*The Birmingham Daily Post* (051126)  
*The Glasgow Herald* (150427)  
*The Inquirer* (061126)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (161226)  
*The Nation and the Athenaeum* (201126)  
*The New Statesman* (120222)  
*The Outlook* (280122)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (181126)

**Red Oleanders – Editorial and author's interpretation**

*The Manchester Guardian* (280825)

**Red Oleanders – reviews**

*Dublin Evening Mail* (220725)  
*The Midland Counties Express* (020126)  
*The Scotsman* (230725)  
*Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (230725)  
*The Southport Guardian* (200126)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (090725)

**The Religion of Man – review**

*The Listener* (100631)

**Report**

**– on bonfire for Tagore at Copenhagen**

*Public Opinion* (260821)

- **on the closure of Presidency College**  
*The Times Educational Supplement* (020516)
- **of dinner reception by India Society**  
*The Times* (130712)
- **on Gandhi's following out of Hand**  
*The Times* (120921)
- **of the meeting at Shakespear Hut**  
*The Morning Post* (090421)
- **of the meeting of the National Congress**  
*The Manchester Guardian* (020117)
- **of the reception by All Peoples' Association**  
*The Manchester Guardian* (090131)
- **of the reception by Indian Students**  
*The Times* (160613)
- **on sale figures** *Western Daily Press* (110414)  
*The Daily Chronicle* (210217)
- **on Tagore in Berlin**  
*The Daily News* (030621)
- **on the Tagore Boom**  
*The Daily Dispatch* (190214)  
*The Daily Dispatch* (190217)
- **on Tagore in Germany**  
*The Birmingham Mail* (020921)
- **on Tagore's illness in USA**  
*The Times* (211030)  
*On Tagore's lecture in the recep*
- **on Tagore's school**  
*The Daily Telegraph* (260214)  
*The Times Educational Supplement* (210916)
- **on Tagore in Vienna**  
*The Observer* (260621)

**Sacrifice and Other Plays – reviews**

- The Manchester Guardian* (271117)
- The Northern Echo* (111217)
- The Scotsman* (011117)
- The Western Daily Press* (171117)
- The Yorkshire Post* (191217)

**Sadhana – reviews**

- The Birkenhead News* (240114)
- The Birmingham Daily Post* (061213)
- The Christian Commonwealth* (171213)
- The Daily Telegraph* (241213)
- The Friend* (130214)
- The Glasgow Herald* (251213)
- The Globe* (221213)
- The Inquirer* (271213)
- The Irish Times* (130214)
- The Manchester Guardian* (060114)
- Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register* (180814)

*The Nation* (131213)  
*The New Statesman* (170114)  
*The Saturday Review* (271213)  
*The Spectator* (140214)  
*The Times Literary Supplement* (140514)

**Shantiniketan: The Bolpur School of Rabindranath Tagore - reviews**

*The Daily Graphic* (150617)  
*Everyman* (200417)  
*Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (180417)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (040617)  
*The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper* (30 06 17)  
*The Spectator* (120517)

**Stray Birds - reviews**

*The Birmingham Daily Post* (140217)  
*The Christian Commonwealth* (090517)  
*The Daily Express* (070217)  
*The Daily Express and Irish Mail* (200317)  
*The Daily Graphic* (090317)  
*The Era* (210217)  
*The Inquirer* (310317)  
*The New Witness* (310517)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (190217)  
*The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper* (140417)  
*The Scotsman* (190217)  
*The Spectator* (240317)

**Tagore's appeal to US**

*The Times* (170640)

**Tagore and the Czechs**

*The Manchester Guardian* (151238)

**Tagore in film**

*The Times* (301229)

**Tagore - on American Films**

*The Observer* (080826)  
*The Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (110826)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (051026)

**- on arrest of Gandhi**

*The Spectator* (300132)

**- on British connection in India**

*The Manchester Guardian* (160338)

**- on Czechoslovakia**

*The Manchester Guardian* (151238)  
*The Manchester Guardian* (191238)

**- on colour bar**

*The Spectator* (090531)

**- on communal award**

*Belfast News-letter* (160736,  
*The Morning Post* (170736)

**- on Gandhi's comment on Bihar earthquake**

*The Times* (080234)

**- on "A great awakening"**

*The Times* (060235)

**- on the issue in India**

*The Spectator* (300132)

- on the review of "Mother India"

*The Manchester Guardian Weekly* (141027)

- on Non-Cooperation of Gandhi

*The Inquirer* (090721)

- on religion

*Psychic News* (080537)

- on The Round Table Conference

*The Spectator* (151130)

**Tagore in Hungary**

*The Observer* (141126)

**Tagore and Italy - a comment on Tagore's conversation with Mussolini**

*The Inquirer* (140826)

- a comment on Tagore's visit in Italy

*The Nation and The Athenaeum* (070826)

- interview on his Italian visit

*The Manchester Guardian* (060826)

- letter to Andrews on the Philosophy of Fascism

*The Manchester Guardian* (050826)

- letter by Carlo Formichi

*The Manchester Guardian* (250826)

- on Fascism: an editorial

*The Manchester Guardian*

*The Manchester Guardian* (290726)

- on Italian Interview

*The Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (280626)

**Tagore Society**

*The Star* (100437)

**Tribute to King's death**

*The Times* (220136)

*Western Mail and South Wales News* (230136)

**Tribute to Kipling's death**

*Halifax Daily Courier and Guardian* (180136)

*Morning Post* (200136)

*The Times* (200136)

**Tribute to Lord Brabourne's death**

*The Birmingham Post* (240239)

**The Winged Philosopher**

*The Passing Show* (101232)

**Western Civilization Denounced in Japan**

*The Times* (020117)

**The Wreck - review**

*The Queen* (210521)

## Appendix 1

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S TOUR IN BRITAIN SOME IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

**1878 : 10 October, 1878 to February, 1880**

**1890 : 10 September to 9 October, 1890**

**1912 : 16 June to 19 October, 1912**

16 June -- arrived London with his son, daughter-in-law and his student Somendrachandra Burman. Lodged in Bloomsbury Hotel.

17 June -- went to meet William Rothenstein at his residence at Oak Hill Park in Hampstead

18 June -- moved with the party to 2 Hallford Road -- a boarding house, in Hampstead.

19 June -- went to meet W. W. Pearson at his house in Hampstead.

21 June -- moved to his temporary residence at 3 Villas on Heath, Vale of Health in Hampstead

27 June -- met W. B. Yeats at a dinner in Rothenstein's house.

7 July -- poetry reading in presence of many distinguished writers and intellectuals at Rothenstein's house.

10 July -- reception given by the India Society at Trocadero restaurant.

12 July -- went to Cambridge to meet Goldsworthy Lowes Dickenson. There he met Bertrand Russell, Prof. Cornford and his wife (granddaughter of Charles Darwin) and J. D. Anderson

30 July -- The Tagore evening at Royal Albert Hall, organised by the Indian Art and Dramatic Society.

2 August -- went to Butternut Village at Staffordshire.

10 August -- went to Stroud in Gloucestershire.

25 August -- returned to London and lodged in 37 Alfred Place, South Kensington.

2 October -- attended the Sesame Club dinner at the invitation of May Sinclair.

19 October -- sailed for USA.

**1913 : 19 April to 3 September, 1913**

19 April -- returned from USA, lodged in Norfolk Hotel, Harrington Road, South Kensington, London

1 May -- moved to 37 Alfred Place.

4 May -- went to meet Ernest Rhys at his house in Golders Green

9 May -- read *Chitra* at 21 Cromwell Road.

18 May -- addressed the Majlis Society, Cambridge : Sub: *The Ancient Religious ideals of India*.

19 May -- returned to London.

23 May -- addressed in Oxford. Subject: *Realisation in Love*.

3 June -- invited by Sturge Moore at the dinner to discuss about his new translation *The Crescent Moon*.

10 June -- read *The King of the Dark Chamber* at Rothenstein's house.

14 June -- reception at the Critarian Restaurant.

17 June -- reception at Lyceum Club.

19 June -- Tagore spoke at Indian Women's Education Association; moved to 16 Moore's Garden, Chayne Walk, Chelsea.

29 June -- Admitted to Dutchess Nursing Home for an operation.

10 July -- *The Post-Office* was staged by the Abbey Group at the Royal Court Theatre

22 July -- discharged from the Nursing Home.

3 September -- left England.

**1920 : 5 June to 6 August, 1920**

5 June -- reached Plymouth, received by K.N.Dasgupta and W. Pearson; from Plymouth to Paddington (London) by train, received by W. Rothenstein, lodged in Kensington Palace Garden.

12 June — Tagore's reception at Shakespeare Hut.

19 June — lecture at Oxford : *The Message of the Forest*.

24 to 29 July — Tagore's lecture (*Some songs of the Village Mystics of Bengal*) and drama at Caxton Hall organised by Union of East and West.

6 August — left for Paris.

**Returned to London from Europe on 13 October, 1920**

Left for USA at the end of October.

**1921 : 24 March, 1921 to 16 April, 1921**

8 April — lecture in Shakespeare Hut : *Meeting of the East and the West*.

16 April — left for Europe again. After the European tour left for India boarding on 2 July from Marseilles.

**1926 : 4 August, 1926 to 20 August, 1926**

4 August (?) — arrived London from the Continent.

6 August — went to Epstein's studio for a sitting for his bust.

8 August — left for Dartington, Devon.

10 August (?) — went to Carbis Bay, Cornwallis, met Bertrand Russell and his wife.

16 August — back to London.

20 August (?) - Left for Norway.

**1930 : 11 May to July 1930**

11 May — arrived London from Paris with his secretary Arium Aryanakam.

13 May — stayed in the Quaker Settlement at Woodbroke in Birmingham

14 May — read from his works for the benefit of the Woodbroke students and Staff.

15 May — read a paper on *Civilisation and Progress* at George Cadbury Hall, Woodbroke.

17 May — went to Oxford with Amiya Chakrabarty and C.F.Andrews

19 May — first Hibbert Lecture at the Manchester College, Oxford. Subject - *The Religion of Man*.

21 May — second Hibbert Lecture.

24 May — came back to Woodbroke to attend The Quakers' Annual Conference.

25 May — back in Oxford, addressed in an evening mass held at the Chapel of Manchester College, Oxford. Subject - *Night and Morning*.

26 May — final Hibbert Lecture.

26 May — back in Woodbroke

29 May — lantern lectures were arranged in Woodbroke on Tagore's work at Santiniketan.

30 May — back in London, Lodged in Aryabhavan, met the Labour MP Sir Wedgewood Benn at Whitehall.

2 June — first exhibition of Tagore's paintings opened in Britain at the Birmingham Corporation Art Gallery,

3 June — PEN club dinner with Shaw.

4 June — exhibition of Tagore's paintings at the British Indian Union Gallery, London, arranged by the India Society.

5 June — went to Dartington

Left for Berlin on 10 July (?)

**1931 : 22 December, 1930 to January, 1931**

22 December, 1930 — Returned to London after touring Russia, rest of Europe and America.

8 January, 1931 — Reception given at Hyde Park Hotel by All People's Association.

Left England for the last time on 10 January(?) 1931.

## Appendix 2

### TAGORE'S PLAYS AND PLAYS BASED ON TAGORE'S STORIES STAGED IN BRITAIN (1912 - 1941)

- 30 July, 1912 : ***Maharani of Arakan***  
at Albert Hall, London, based on Tagore's story Daliya, dramatised by George Calderon, produced by Indian Art and Dramatic Society; Directed by K. N. Dasgupta.
- 19 May, 1913 : ***The Post Office***  
At Abbey Theatre, Dublin, by Abbey Group; Directed by Lenox Robinson.
- 10 July, 1913 : ***The Post Office***  
At the Royal Court Theatre, London, performed by the Abbey Group, Directed by Lenox Robinson.
- 19 June - 8 July, 1916 : ***Maharani of Arakan***  
(one night among three weeks of variety performances) At London Colosseum, enacted by Ronald Coleman and Lena Ashwell.
- 3 September, 1921 : ***The Farewell Curse***  
(along with *Kunala* by D.G.Mukherji and *Savitri* by K.N Dasgupta) Open-air performance at Lord Leverhulme's Garden by Union of East and West.
- 22 October, 1921 : ***Trial by Luck***  
(along with *Malati* and *Madhava* by Bhababhuri) at Wigmore Hall, London by Union of East and West.
- 24 and 26 July, 1924 : ***Farewell Curse***  
(along with *Sakuntala*) at Lord Leverhulme's Garden at Hampstead, by Union of East and West.
- 4 July, 1936 : ***Sacrifice***  
St Mary's Hall, Shoreham, Sussex. Directed by Rev. R.C. Filler.
- 30 July, 1936 : ***Suttee***  
At Hampstead Garden.
- 15 February, 1937 : ***Baikunther Khata*** (Bengali Drama)  
At Kings-Cross, London, By Basabendra Nath Tagore.
- 1 December, 1937 : ***Sacrifice***  
By Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, London. Directed by H.H.Balsom.
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## Appendix 3

### TAGORE'S WRITINGS PUBLISHED FROM BRITAIN BETWEEN 1912 AND 1941

[unless otherwise stated translations were by the author himself  
and published by Macmillan and Co, London]

#### 1912

**Gitanjali** (November, 1912): poems, first published by the India Society, London, then by Macmillan (March, 1913).

#### 1913

**Glimpses of Bengal Life**: short stories, translated by Rajani Ranjan Sen, published by Luzac and Co. (London).

**The Gardener** (September, 1913): lyrics of love and life..

**Sadhana** (October, 1913): essays.

**The Crescent Moon** (November, 1913): child poems.

#### 1914

**Chitra** (January, 1914): play, first published by the India Society, London, then by Macmillan.

**The King of the Dark Chamber** (May, 1914): play; translated by Kshitish Chandra Sen.

**The Post-office** (March, 1914): play, translated by Devabrata Mukherjea, an earlier edition by Cuala Press, Dublin.

#### 1915

**One hundred poems of Kabir** (1915): poems, translations from Bengali was by Ajit Chakrabarty; later revised by Tagore, first published by the India Society, London then by Macmillan.

#### 1916

**Maharani of Arakan** (1916): play, translated from a short-story by George Calderon; published by Francis Griffiths, London.

**Hungry Stones and Other Stories** (1916): short stories, translated by several writers namely: Pannalal Basu(1), Prabhat Kumar Mukherji(1), Sister Nivedita (1), Tagore(1), E. J. Thompson (1) and C. F. Andrews (7). **Fruit-gathering**: poems.

#### 1917

**Stray Birds** (January, 1917): epigrammatic verses, first published by Macmillan New York, followed by Macmillan, London.

**The Cycle of Spring** (February, 1917): play, translated by C.F.Andrews and Nishikanta Sen.

**Personality** (May, 1917): collection of essays written in English, first published in New York followed by London.

**My Reminiscences** (July, 1917): autobiography, translated by Surendranath Tagore.

**Nationalism** (August, 1917): collection of essays written in English, first published by Macmillan New York, followed by Macmillan, London

**Sacrifice and Other Plays** (October, 1917): collection of plays.

#### 1918

**Mashi and Other stories** (March, 1918): short stories, translated by several writers. **Lover's Gift and Crossing** (May, 1918): poems.

#### 1919

**Gitanjali and Fruit-gathering** (May, 1919): combined volume.

**Home and the World** (May, 1919): novel, translated by Surendranath Tagore.

**1921**

**The Fugitive** (October, 1921): poems.

**The Wreck** (May, 1921): novel, translated by J.G.Drummond.

**Glimpses of Bengal** (May 1921): letters, translated by Surendranath Tagore

**1922**

**Creative Unity** (February, 1922): essays, written in English.

**1923**

**Gora** (December, 1923): novel, translated by W.W.Pearson.

**1924**

**The Curse of Farewell**: play, translated by E.J.Thompson, published by George G. Harrap and Co., London.

**1925**

**Red Oleanders** (June, 1925): play.

**The Augustan Books of Modern Poetry Series**: collection of 21 poems and 12 epigrams, translated by Edward Thompson, published by Ernest Benn, London.

**Broken Ties and Other Stories** (September, 1925): short stories, translated by several writers.

**1931**

**The Religion in Man**: lectures, written in English, published by Allen and Unwin, London.

**The Child**: poems, originally written in English, published by Allen and Unwin, London.

**1932**

**The Golden Boat**: a collection of Tagore poems translated by Bhabani Bhattacharya, published by Allen and Unwin, London.

**1936**

**Collected Poems and Plays**: an anthology of Tagore's works.

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